

ALL HANDS

NOVEMBER 1990

Operation Desert Shield

While deployed in the Mediterranean Sea, a crewman carries wheel chocks across the flight deck of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69). U.S. Navy photo.



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ALL HANDS

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Photo by PHAA Craig Dietrich

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Front cover: LT Dennis Alston keeps tabs on a liquified natural gas tanker transiting the Gulf of Oman. See story, Page 24. Photo by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen.

Back cover: Faces of *Operation Desert Shield*. See related stories throughout. Photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen and JO2(SW) Joe Bartlett.

News You Can Use

Financial issues

Compensation statements issued locally

Local commands will soon be able to give sailors an up-to-date compensation statement that explains the full value of their military pay and benefits.

Navywide distribution of the revised Personal Statement of Military Compensation is outlined in NavOp 053/90.

In the past, the PSMC was distributed by the Navy Finance Center along with Leave and Earning Statements. Now, the statement will be produced by a new computer software program at local commands or at the supporting unit.

The statement is designed to provide each sailor with an assessment of his or her total compensation package. Many sailors have found the statement useful when applying for loans and mortgages. □

“Fax” sheets

Contrary to popular belief, a cover sheet is not required on all facsimile transmissions.

In an ACom message (031/90 June 15, 1990) released by the Chief of Naval Operations, commands were encouraged to make an effort to save money when using this modern convenience. It can take up to three minutes to “fax” a single page and can be quite costly when using commercial long distance carriers.

Originating commands are responsible for determining whether a cover sheet is needed, or whether a short note with name, phone number and address of the originator placed on the document would suffice. □

Some families need not vacate government quarters at transfer

Sailors transferring to the Philippines, Puerto Rico or Charleston, S.C., can leave their families behind in military housing at their previous duty stations. Navy officials have granted exemptions to a policy that usually requires Navy families to vacate government quarters when the sponsor is reassigned.

In the Philippines, off-base housing may be unsafe for families of American service men and women. Several instances, some serious, have involved active-duty members. The exemptions were granted for Puerto Rico and Charleston due to Hurricane Hugo, which caused tremendous damage when it struck in September 1989.

The exemptions apply only to families already in government quarters, and there are slight differences in exemptions for each duty station. Personnel should consult their housing officer for more information. □

Musicians needed for Navy bands

The Navy's music program currently needs musicians who play clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, electric bass or keyboards.

Prospective players must audition with an official Navy band and, if successful, request a lateral rating conversion and the musician “A” school.

For more information contact the musician detailee, Naval Military Personnel Command, at commercial (703) 746-7000 or Autovon 286-7000. □

Navywide recruiting effort

To encourage all hands to support the recruiting effort, a Recruiting Support Guide (OpNavNote 1155, July 12, 1990) was distributed to every command. The guide describes programs to help recruiting and enhance community relations.

It suggests ways to get the most out of special visits to U.S. ports, aircraft displays and demonstrations, orientation cruises for youth and community leaders and the Hometown Area Recruiting Program (HARP).

The recruiting guide also lists points of contact, checklists and other information useful in establishing or re-energizing public contact programs. It also encourages commands to share feedback and ideas for successful recruiting projects.

According to VADM Mike Boorda, chief of naval personnel, "If we are going to recruit high-quality youth, we must take an active role in promoting Navy awareness." □

Journeyman certificates

Under a joint program sponsored by the Navy and the U.S. Department of Labor, sailors have an opportunity to earn a journeyman certificate in a civilian trade related to their rating.

The National Apprenticeship Program provides incentives which improve job performance by recognizing job-related skills learned while on active duty. The program's main purpose is to develop highly-skilled, Navy-oriented journeymen who will continue to use their technical knowledge in the Navy.

The journeyman certificate is awarded upon completion of the required number of hours — from 2,000 to 8,000 — depending on the trade.

To qualify, enlisted members must be on active duty, in one of the approved ratings and have a high school diploma or GED.

For more information see OpNavInst 1560.10, or your command career counselor. □

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Advancement Manual delayed until January

Distribution of the new advancement manual is delayed until the end of the year because of problems with printing. Once received by Educational Services Offices around the fleet, personnel can obtain the latest information on numerous changes affecting their advancement. NMPC officials advise *All Hands* that the manual should reach ESOs in January. □

Operation Desert Shield

Bringing bullets and beans in a big hurry.

Story by JO1 Melissa Wood Lefler, photos by William J. Pointer

Five minutes before quitting time Friday, Aug. 10, LCDR Franky Lane received a phone call at his Norfolk office which instantly rearranged his plans. He had planned to go home, grab a quick bite and take a short nap before returning to work at the giant Naval Supply Center.

"Customer service is flooded with people," reported LCDR Eric Ferraro, the customer service officer, in that 4:25 p.m. phone call. "Sailors are lined up with requisitions from the front desk to the entrance door, and out around the corner of the building."

Although Ferraro's phone call was not entirely unexpected, considering the urgent briefing the key supply center officers attended only two hours earlier, Lane, bulk material storage officer at NSC, knew he had to act fast.

"I started waving my arms to stop my employees as they stepped out the door," Lane said. He told workers the customer service department would have to stay open late that night, as well as through the entire weekend — a drastic departure from normal working hours. They faced a Herculean task, Lane explained. All but a few readily agreed to stay.

The task ahead of Lane's division, and for nearly 500 more Naval Supply Center civilian and military workers who signed on to work double shifts around-the-clock for the next two days, and 12-hour shifts for another nine days, was to loadout a carrier battle group to sail out of Norfolk on

very short notice. The aircraft carrier USS *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67) and three escort ships — although not yet ordered to head for the Persian Gulf — had to be completely ready to standby offshore and head for the Middle East if called.

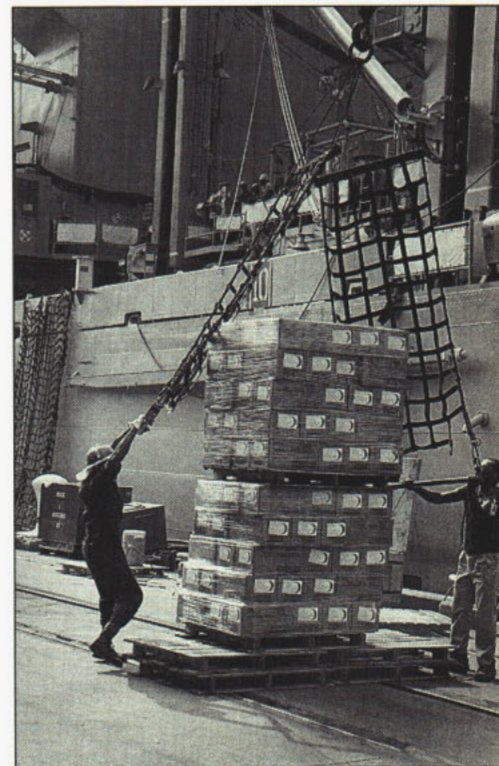
Once ready to sail, *Kennedy's* battle group would be able to join others in enforcing the naval blockade of Iraq sanctioned by the United Nations in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. For *Kennedy* and her escorts, that meant the normal process of locating and loading supplies for a six-month cruise at sea, usually a 30-day process, would have to be squeezed into just a few days.

It couldn't have happened at a worse time, Ferraro admitted later. Supply center stevedores and warehousemen were already working overtime to load three huge ships also bound for the Persian Gulf: the hospital ship USNS *Comfort* (T-AH 20), the combat stores ship USS *Sylvania* (AFS 2) and the fast combat support ship USS *Seattle* (AOE 3).

In addition, 13 Norfolk-based amphibious ships had to be loaded out at the same time to leave for the Persian Gulf. What's more, *Kennedy* was almost bare of supplies. Since returning to Norfolk just a few weeks before, *Kennedy's* crew had stripped her

shelves almost bare of food and parts in anticipation of a scheduled, extended shipyard overhaul.

As a result, the supply center's provisions (food services) division — already known throughout the Navy as the world's biggest supermarket — had to digest a large portion of the job of getting the battle group ready to go. The supply center's provisions officer, LDCR Al Peschke, was in a meeting with *Kennedy's* supply officer on board the carrier that afternoon, Aug. 10, when word came down that *Kennedy*



A Norfolk stevedore loads supplies for a waiting ship in anticipation of a six-month deployment.

Sailors wait to be served at Norfolk's supply center for much-needed, last-minute supplies.

must be stocked up to sail in just a few days.

When Peschke left the carrier to return to his office, he hand-carried thousands of dollars worth of provisions requisitions. For one thing, *Kennedy's* supply officer had asked Peschke for 700 pallets of food to be on the pier ready for *Kennedy* sailors to bring on board the next afternoon.

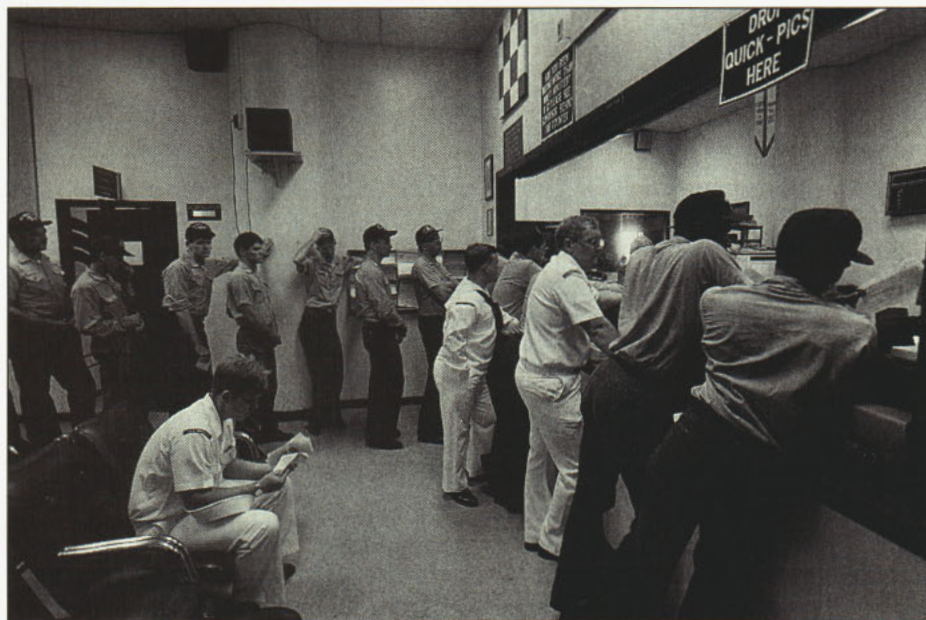
Pallets were there by the time the sun came up Saturday, and more kept arriving throughout the weekend. Seven truckloads containing more than 2 million fresh eggs were shipped in from as far away as Alabama, Louisiana and Massachusetts.

Although the ships carry powdered and frozen eggs, fresh eggs are an important item, Peschke explained. "I don't want to send sailors to sea with nothing but powdered eggs. I make sure the sailors can get hamburgers, hot dogs, barbecued chicken, eggs, fresh milk and cheese while they are underway. That's what they want, and it's not too much to ask," he said.

For *Kennedy* and her escorts, that totaled 185,000 pounds of hot dogs, 250,000 pounds of chicken and 400,000 pounds of hamburger — located, trucked in and loaded within five days. All the food came from DoD supply depots, Peschke added. Nothing had to be procured from commercial sources.

When the carrier battle group left Aug. 15, it was 95 percent stocked with "nice-to-have" items and 100 percent stocked with necessities in food, as well as other supplies, Peschke said. "*Seattle* had one item not in stock — frozen strawberries," the provisions officer recited from memory, "and *Sylvania* left without grits or mushrooms."

Still, only enough nice-to-have items can be stocked aboard *Kennedy*



to last for 30 days — that's normal, Peschke said. "That's why we try to put as many nice-to-have items as possible on the resupply ships," he explained.

With all the trucks coming on base with food and supplies, the street in front of the Norfolk Naval Base piers, usually deserted over the weekend, was a tangle of snarled foot traffic, tractor trailers, cranes and forklifts.

"Friday night about nine there were big semis coming onto the base, and not much traffic going off," Lane noticed — a pattern he had never seen before at that time of day. "It was like Monday morning rather than the beginning of a weekend."

During the weekend, the scene surrounding the supply center must have looked like chaos to a casual observer — adjacent streets, parking lots and piers were so filled with crates and pallets, cars and vans, trucks and cranes, that people could hardly find a footpath through them.

But in contrast to the apparent bedlam, a massive effort was being choreographed. The huge cranes, forklifts and flatbed trucks danced their parts like hippopotami and elephants in a behemoth ballet. All that needed to be done was to pass the word — everything was under control.

"This situation did create some havoc with my 'hot' list," Lane admitted. "We had just three categories that weekend — hot, hotter, and hottest.

And which ship was in what category shifted from hour to hour, at first."

"The supply officers on the ships were the frantic ones," said Ferraro. "They were all told they had to be ready within 72 hours. But we at the Naval Supply Center had to decide internally, based on constantly changing information, who was really 'hot-test' on the list," he added.

"It was basically a matter of telling the ships, 'No, this ship is ahead of you, they're leaving before you, but we guarantee you'll get what you need in plenty of time,'" said LCDR Chris Lamont, fuel division officer, whose division had to dip into reserve supplies to deliver 525,000 barrels of fuel oil to departing ships and air squadrons during the first two weeks in August — more than twice the usual amount. "Once they realized we had a very specific plan, everybody calmed down."

Meanwhile, at Ferraro's customer service area 2,900 "bearer requisitions" [hand-carried documents] were brought in by sailors whose ships were scheduled to leave. "That's more than usually passes over the customer service counter in a month," Lane added. Dozens of sailors stood patiently, sometimes waiting several hours just to get up to the counter to hand in their requests. Behind that counter, Storekeeper 1st Class Ana-Marie Waters was just as tired, and just as determined to get the job done.

Operation Desert Shield

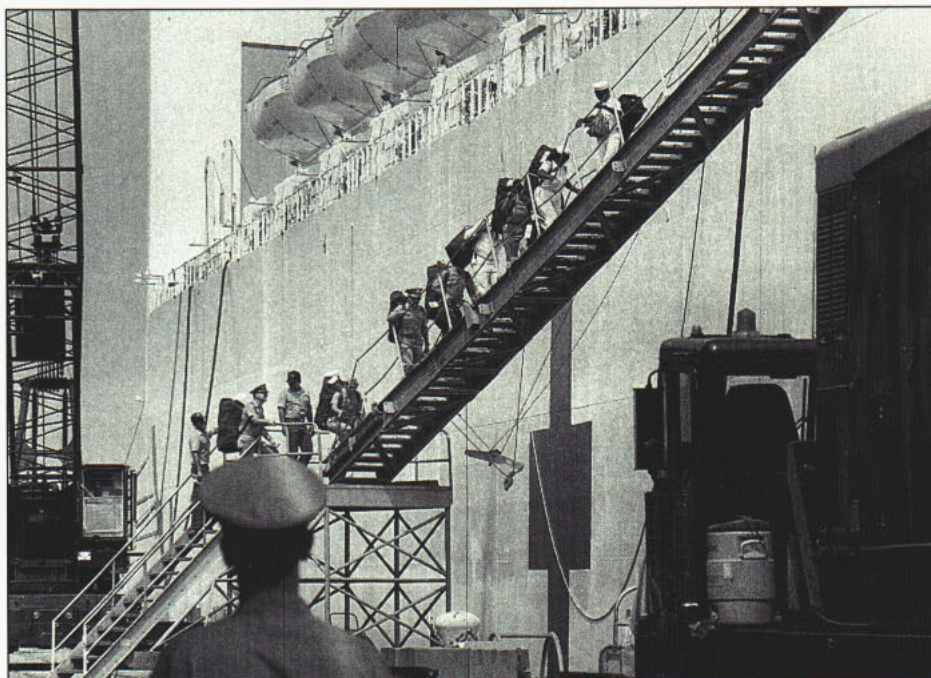
"I started my two weeks annual Reserve duty the Monday morning before the *Kennedy* battle group went out," said Waters, a former active-duty storekeeper who is now a full-time college student in Baltimore. "I sure didn't know what I was in for."

Waters' husband, an active-duty storekeeper, had been suddenly transferred a few days before from shore duty in southern Maryland to the hospital ship *Comfort*, on its way to the Persian Gulf. "The day I reported, my husband's ship was the 'hottest' on the supply center's 'hot' list," Waters said. "When the ship finally pulled out at 7:30 Tuesday night, the only way I knew he was leaving was that I could hear the ship's horn blow from where I stood at the customer service counter. We were still open, still working," she added.

The other departments in the Navy's largest supply center faced the same mind-boggling dilemma — how to cram a month's worth of parts and paperwork into a few hours and then onto the ships. Norfolk's Servmart, the all-purpose hardware, office supply and housewares store is normally open between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. That store remained open for the weekend and late at night to give customers from the departing ships a chance to stock up on necessary goods such as sheets, pillow cases, swabs, brooms and computer paper.

Between Aug. 10 and 15, Servmart rang up \$1.2 million in sales. "A real good month usually doesn't bring in that much," said LT Harry Davis, Servmart officer. Right behind the top sellers of toilet paper — 1,500 cases were loaded onto *Kennedy* alone — Xerox paper, sunscreen, sunglasses, insect repellent, dog tags, first aid kits and cheesecloth, which protects sensitive electronic equipment from dry winds and blowing sand were also loaded, Davis said.

"During the week-long load out of *Kennedy's* battle group, *Comfort* and



the amphibious ships, we received and put back on the Servmart shelves more than 8 million pounds of goods," Davis said. In some cases, stock hastily transported from outlying warehouses and other supply depots didn't even make it into the store, much less onto the shelves. As trucks pulled up to the loading bays in the back of Servmart with pallets of supplies, sailors pulled their ships' smaller pick-ups and vans around the back, too.

"The sailors spotted pallets and bundles marked for their ships and loaded up right off our big trucks," Davis said. "We just processed their paperwork out there, too." After Servmart closed at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 12, workers labored until almost midnight to restock the almost empty shelves, anticipating a record-setting Monday, the next day. "It was a good thing we did," Davis said, "because the next day was our biggest day ever in the history of Servmart — \$313,000 in sales in one day."

For Eloise Neal, Servmart cashier, the Monday before *Kennedy's* carrier battle group went out was a day she won't soon forget. "There were masses of people in the aisles; you could hardly

Supplies aren't the only things loaded onto ships. Grim-faced sailors, with full seabags on their backs, take the first steps of their journey to the Middle East.

walk around to find what you needed," she reported. "All of our seven cashier lines were open — we normally only have two lines open — and still the lines of people waiting to be rung up stretched all the way to the back of the store."

"All of our employees worked," she continued, "even those scheduled to be off, or come to work on the second shift. The men who normally stock shelves were operating cash registers. You couldn't get a market basket. Customers were waiting for other customers to ring out and unload so that they could get a basket. I've never seen that happen before; we have plenty of baskets here."

The only breaks Servmart employees took all day were for water and the bathroom, Neal said. Lunch and dinner, except for those who had thought to bring a bag lunch, were candy and soda from the machines at the back of the store. Soon those machines were empty.

Just when the store was a sea of blue dungaree-clad sailors, the Army arrived. "The soldiers from Fort Eustis and Fort Story were at the top of the 'hot' list that Monday," said Neal. "Their mission was most critical." The Army pulled in with 5-ton trucks, bought and loaded more than \$100,000 in supplies, Davis said.

Tuesday and Wednesday brought more of the same. Finally the intensity eased Wednesday afternoon, after *Kennedy* pulled out, said Neal.

While sailors came to customer service and Servmart to get supplies to take back to their ships, critical perishables, such as huge quantities of food and medical supplies, were brought down to the piers by stevedores and warehousemen, who worked 12-hour shifts around-the-clock, seven-days-a-week for two weeks.

Warehouseman Cornelius Winder, a 12-year veteran at the Naval Supply Center, said although after 12 hours on the job, the physical strain of lifting got very tiring, the effort he and fellow workers put in to get *Kennedy's* battle group and *Comfort* ready to sail was worthwhile. "Because of what has been happening in the world, the Navy really needs these supplies," said Winder. "*Comfort* — that's one of the most important ships over there. If anything happens, they'll really need that ship."

Stevedore Vance Moore expressed similar feelings. "I didn't do it for the overtime," said Moore, who assisted the crane operators in addition to his own duties loading refrigerated food, medicines and drinks aboard *Comfort*, *Sylvania* and *Seattle*. "Being a [military] veteran, I was thinking all the time about the guys over there, how they needed all this stuff. The other guys here who have never been in service — I talk to them, get them to understand how that's a long way to be away from home without the things they need and a long time away, too."

Despite the muscle fatigue, Moore said that care was taken to make sure



that the job was done in the safest way. "During a week of nonstop loading, we didn't drop or break anything but a couple of cans of fruit cocktail, and nobody on the piers got hurt," Moore related.

Multiply attitudes of these sailors and civil service workers hundreds of times over, and you understand the secret behind the success of this most difficult mission, said Naval Supply Center Executive Officer CAPT Dan Conti.

"The amount of cargo they handled — I don't see how they did it without breaking their backs," Conti said. "The challenge of making this happen was the catalyst, I think," the center's XO continued. "You have to remember, too, that we have a very seasoned work force — even our 'temporary' workers have been here a long time. We also employ many reservists and military retirees. They know what was needed and why, and they kept their co-workers involved."

"I didn't hear one complaint," said fuel officer Lamont, of his civilian work force during the weeks of deadline pressures. "My people worked incredibly long hours — 16 to 18 hours a day. They felt they had shared something important, you could see it on their faces — they were proud of themselves for giving 100 percent."

"I've been here, in this job, 12 weeks," Lamont continued, "and now I know that nothing is going to happen during my tour that these folks can't handle."

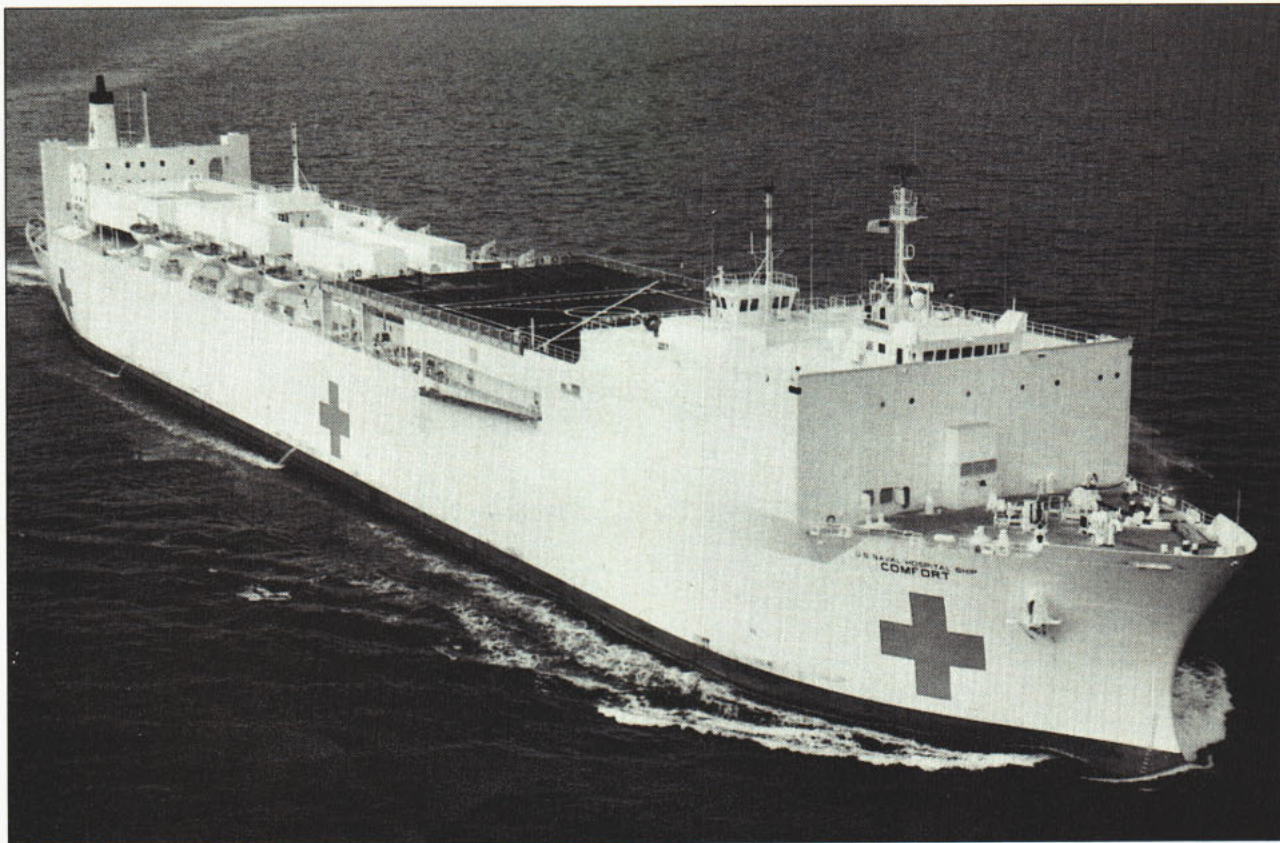
These sailors have plenty of time to contemplate what the next few months may hold in store for them as they wait, in some cases for hours, to get their requisitions filled.

The Naval Supply Center's Commanding Officer CAPT Charles Smith, believes that his center definitely could, if asked, do the same thing again, as soon as next week. "We're here to do just this sort of thing, and we did it," Smith said, "I have always known that we could handle a situation like this, but now we've proven it for everyone to see." Smith added, that within 10 days of the departure of *Kennedy* and her battle escorts, all his warehouses were back up to their normal stock level.

Still, proud and tired, the workers at the supply center probably would just as soon not repeat the whole experience, at least for a while.

Neal of Servmart, perhaps sums up the feelings of her whole organization best. "All of us here are proud of the job we did," she said. "We talk about it every time we get a break — it's the main topic of conversation. And every time we pick up a newspaper, or glance at the headline news on TV, we will continue to talk about it — how we serviced those troops when they needed us." □

Lefler is assigned to NIRA Det 4, Norfolk.



USNS *Comfort* begins Mideast mission

Compiled by JO1 Sherri E. Bashore

On Aug. 2 Iraqi military forces invaded Kuwait and took up threatening positions against Saudi Arabia. This action prompted President Bush to send a large number of ground, air and naval forces to Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf in the event of military hostilities by Iraq.

With the possibility of the outbreak of war, these American servicemen and women not only need the support of family members left behind, but also

that of a team of qualified medical professionals. The Navy deployed USNS *Comfort* (T-AH 20) and USNS *Mercy* (T-AH 19) to fill that need.

As the Persian Gulf situation intensified, more than 800 sailors assigned to the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., were told to prepare for deployment. Within a week of the action, 300 medical and support personnel processed out and headed by bus to Norfolk to join approximately 100 of

their shipmates aboard the hospital ship *Comfort*.

NNMC Commander RADM Donald F. Hagan addressed crew members and those in attendance at the emotional Aug. 16 send-off.

"You are the most flexible, finest, state-of-the-art medical department to support the fleet," he said. "Bethesda has responded to the call from the Navy to support the fleet. This is truly the mission of Navy medicine."

Sailors from NNMC will make up almost the entire Medical Treatment Facility complement aboard the ship. CAPT (Dr.) Roger J. Pentizien, director of medical services at NNMC, commands *Comfort's* medical team.

An additional 400 sailors from NNMC and other bases throughout the Washington, D.C., area departed Aug. 21 from Andrews Air Force Base as part of the second-stage of the deployment. The group flew to the Mediterranean to join first-stage sailors aboard the ship.

Comfort's mission is to provide acute surgical care in support of military operations. The 1,000-bed capacity ship also is capable of offering other medical support.

"Yes we do have a large contingency of surgeons on board, but that's only needed in case of a shooting conflict," said CAPT (Dr.) Robert Timmons, chief medical officer of the second-stage crew. "In the meantime, we'll be using at least some of those beds for treating the other casualties that occur from operations in an environment where, with an ambient temperature of 110 to 120 degrees, dehydration is a big problem.

"We'll be seeing a wide range of diseases, and if you look at where casualties are in combat," Timmons said, "it's infectious diseases, injuries related to falls, poisonous insect bites, food poisoning, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. It's necessary to be able to treat these problems to support the troops.

"I picture *Comfort* and *Mercy* [the only other hospital ship in the world] as general hospitals that will help some of the other ground and surface medical facilities which can do basic surgery and first aid," he said.

Surgeon General of the Navy VADM James A. Zimble, a former medical officer with the Marines, spoke to the sailors and their families



Photo by Ron Aguir



Photo by HM2 David Vangelier

Family members say their "goodbyes" to loved ones in many ways as they depart for the Middle East.



Photo by HM2 David Vangelier

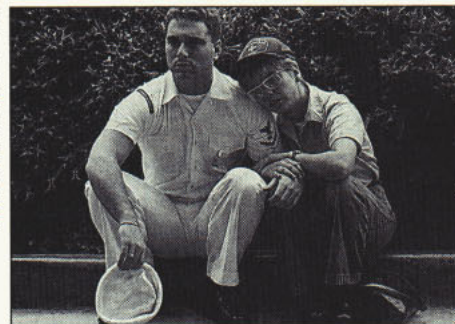


Photo by HM2 David Vangelier

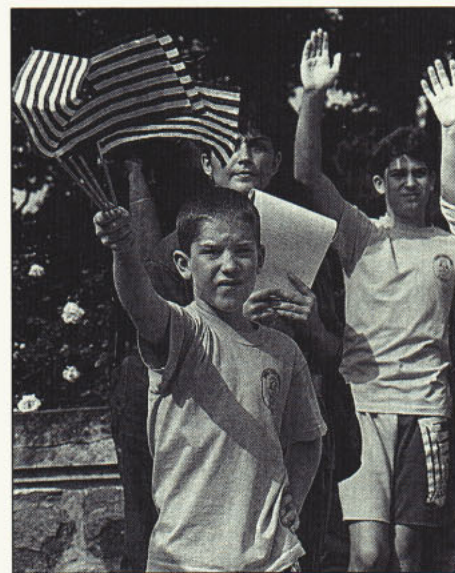


Photo by Ron Aguir

at the tearful gathering of the second-stage deployment.

"There's been a great investment of energy from a large number of personnel who recognized that if we have a contingency like this, we're going to need an instant hospital. And that's what a hospital ship is — all you have to do is add water and you've got an instant hospital," said Zimble.

"Let me tell you what it means to have those two massive ships, each displacing 70,000 tons," Zimble continued. "They send a message to every husband and wife, son and daughter, father and mother of those sailors and Marines that we are putting in harm's way that this nation recognizes its obligation to care for those who become sick or injured. That's a strong, powerful message that demonstrates our commitment to those sailors and Marines."

"Finally," said Zimble, "we're going to send a message to a leader of an adversarial country that says we are committed to fight, we are committed to support that fight and this is not

going to be a victory for you."

With a departure of personnel of this magnitude, NNMC began a rebuilding process. A goal of 75 percent of normal capacity was established as first priority, allowing graduate medical education and enlisted technician training programs to continue.

Support from many areas was needed to meet the on-going mission of NNMC.

"President Bush has authorized a call-up of Reserves and about 475 nurses, corpsmen and a few physicians are reporting here for active duty. Most are from local Reserve units who have drilled at NNMC so they can rapidly integrate into our daily routine," said CAPT (Dr.) William Rowley, deputy commander of NNMC.

Help was also provided by Naval District Washington to fill the support services gap. Other area medical facilities such as Malcolm Grow Air Force Hospital and Walter Reed Army Medical Center assisted by accepting patients in transfer and supporting individual departments. Volunteer physi-

Before deploying, special times mean a quiet moment together, a piggyback ride from dad or a patriotic goodbye.

cians from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences worked in various clinics and supported teaching. Surgical subspecialists have been allowed to operate in the facilities of the National Institutes of Health and the Veterans Affairs Hospital. And, last but not least, dozens of people have called to volunteer their services.

"Whatever the future holds," said Rowley, "we are ready to meet the challenge and will change as necessary to continue our mission of providing quality patient care. The Bethesda family of active-duty personnel, reservists, civil service employees, contract service people and volunteers is a cohesive team which has proven itself to be more than capable of meeting the tasks which lie ahead." □

Information for this article was provided by The Journal, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md.

Desert Shield

September '90 chronology

Sept. 1 — USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), command ship for Commander, 7th Fleet, arrives in the Persian Gulf.

Sept. 2 — The first American hostages allowed to leave Iraq.

Sept. 3 — USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) and USS *Ticonderoga* (CG 47) transit the Strait of Gibraltar en route to East Coast home ports.

Sept. 4 — DoD announces there have been approximately 550 intercepts and 20 boardings since maritime intercept operations began. USS *Goldsborough* (DDG 20) intercepted an Iraqi-bound and registered motor vessel. The motor vessel, loaded with tea, refused orders to either return to its port of origin or proceed to a non-prohibited port. A U.S. Coast Guard detachment from *Goldsborough* boarded the motor vessel. This was the first boarding of an Iraqi vessel during the Gulf crisis. No shots were fired and the ship was diverted to the Omani port of Muscat. The fast sealift cargo ship USNS *Algol* (T-AKR 287), with elements of the 24th (Mechanized) Infantry Division embarked, arrives in Saudi Arabia.

The Reserve call-up for the first increment in September totaled 678.

Sept. 5 — The Navy lifts the firing suspension for USS *Wisconsin's* (BB 64) 16 inch guns.

Sept. 6 — Amphibious ships USS *Nassau* (LHA 4), USS *Raleigh* (LPD 1), USS *Pensacola* (LSD 38) and USS *Saginaw* (LST 1188), with components of the 4th MEB embarked, transit the Suez Canal. The fast sealift cargo ship USNS *Denebola* (T-AKR 289), with elements of the 24th (Mechanized) Infantry Division on board, arrives in Saudi Arabia. Effective today, Liberia and Kuwait are designated as countries

for which imminent danger pay is authorized. The second group of hostages flew out of Kuwait.

Sept. 7 — ARG Alfa units USS *Okinawa* (LPH 3), USS *Ogden* (LPD 5), USS *Fort McHenry* (LSD 43), USS *Durham* (LKA 114) and USS *Cayuga* (LST 1186), with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked, arrive in the Gulf of Oman. Hospital ship USNS *Comfort* (T-AH 20) arrives in the Gulf of Oman.

Sept. 9 — Nearly 300 Americans, who had previously been unable to leave Kuwait, arrive in Charleston, S.C.

Sept. 11 — ARG Bravo units USS *Dubuque* (LPD 8), USS *Schenectady* (LST 1185) and USS *San Bernardino* (LST 1189), with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment embarked, arrive in the Gulf of Oman. Amphibious ships USS *Shreveport* (LPD 12), USS *Trenton* (LPD 14), USS *Gunston Hall* (LSD 44), USS *Portland* (LSD 37) and USS *Spartanburg County* (LST 1192), with components of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade embarked, arrive in the Gulf of Oman.

Sept. 12 — Armed Forces Radio officially switched on. There are approximately 265,000 Iraqi troops and 2,200 tanks in and around occupied Kuwait.

Sept. 13 — In the Persian Gulf, we have 13 ships including: *Blue Ridge*, USS *La Salle* (AGF 3), and the battleship *Wisconsin*. In the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, we have 20 ships, including the carrier USS *Independence* (CV 62). There are currently seven ships in the Red Sea including USS *Saratoga* (CV 60). We have more than 15 ships now on station in the Mediterranean including

the carrier USS *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67).

Sept. 14 — USS *Brewton* (FF 1086), and the HMAS *Darwin* (F 04), a Royal Australian Navy frigate, acting jointly, intercept an Iraqi tanker in the Gulf of Oman and board the vessel to identify its cargo. Reports indicate the tanker refused to halt until both *Brewton* and *Darwin* fired warning shots across her bow. After the second set of warning shots were fired from *Darwin*, the tanker stopped, and a joint boarding party from both ships ascertained there was no prohibited cargo. The tanker was permitted to proceed to its destination. *Kennedy* Carrier Battle Group transits the Suez Canal into the Red Sea, and hospital ship USNS *Mercy* (T-AH 19) arrives in the Gulf of Oman.

Sept. 16 — USS *O'Brien* (DD 975) intercepts a Bahamian flagged merchant tanker, logging the 1,000th intercept since the multinational operations began. Amphibious ships USS *Manitowoc* (LST 1180), USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH 2), USS *Guam* (LPH 9), USS *Raleigh* (LPD 1) and USS *La Moure County* (LST 1194) arrive in the Gulf of Oman with the remainder of the 4th MEB embarked.

Sept. 19 — Three minesweepers and Mine Counter Measures ship USS *Avenger* (MCM 1) are loaded on board *Super Servant III* at Naval Station Norfolk en route to the Persian Gulf. Secretary of Defense announces personnel on duty in the Middle East will receive imminent danger pay, effective September 17.

Sept. 25 — The U.N. Security Council votes to tighten the economic embargo against Iraq by cutting off air traffic to and from that country and Iraqi-occupied Kuwait. □

“Corpsman!”

Navy medicine standing by in the Middle East.

Story and photos by JO1 Melissa Wood Lefler

Almost a month of standing by in a one-hour call-up status ended Aug. 31 for more than 800 Navy doctors, nurses, hospital corpsmen, cooks, administrative specialists and technicians assigned to Portsmouth Naval Hospital.

Within 24 hours, the group of Navy men and women were airborne and heading for the Persian Gulf to form a new command from the ground up — Fleet Hospital 5.

In the first actual deployment of medical personnel in the Navy's new fleet hospital concept, the Navy team flew to Saudi Arabia as part of *Operation Desert Shield*. There they began to assemble, with the help of Seabees already on station, a fully-operational, 500-bed hospital with state-of-the-art medical technology. The entire medical staff will remain on-scene as long as necessary to provide modern medical care for U.S. forces in the Middle East.

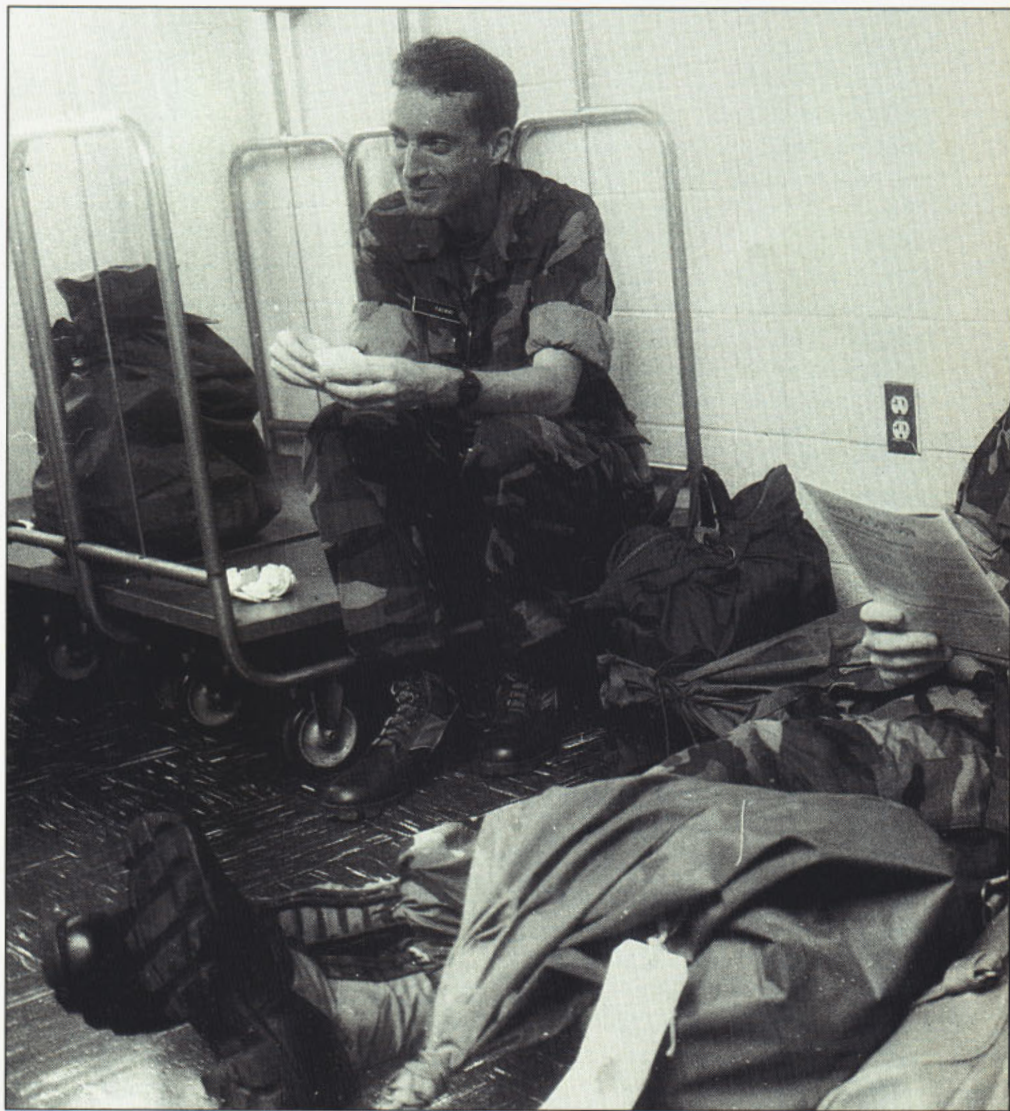
Navy surgeon CAPT (Dr.) Richard Mayo, commanding officer of Fleet Hospital 5, said the Navy Medical Command began gearing up for the fleet hospital concept in the early 1980s as an updated version of the Army's original Mobile Army Surgical Hospital concept. MASH units — small, limited capability hospitals used during the Korean War — were made famous by the movie and televi-

sion show of the same name.

Equipment and supplies to put the fleet hospital together were waiting for the staff when they arrived. From electronic laboratory equipment and living and working quarters to medicine,

bandages, beds and rubber gloves, supplies for fleet hospitals are stored in container ships which are pre-positioned around the globe — constantly ready if peace turns to war.

The concept of maritime pre-posi-



Corpsmen from FH 5 spend the time waiting for departure to the Middle East by reading or gathering their thoughts.

tioning ships, developed by the Navy in the 1970s, is the military strategy which makes the new, large-size fleet hospitals possible, explained Fleet Hospital 5 Executive Officer CAPT Dominick DePolo Jr.

"Almost everything you need to run a modern hospital for 60 days is placed in specialized containers and then prepositioned," DePolo said. "Every ward, every department, every capability we have here [at Portsmouth], we'll have over there, except for obstetrics.

"The fleet hospital is a unique system — called a 'temper' system," the XO continued. "It consists of fully double-lined extended modular units that you can actually build on to."



These modular hospital units, quonset hut shaped tents made of canvas and nylon with foam rubber floors, are air-conditioned in wards and operating rooms, with power supplied by portable generators.

DePolo, a clinical pharmacist, is officer-in-charge of Portsmouth hospital's branch medical clinic at Sewell's Point, right outside the main gate of Norfolk's Naval base. Like the people he will supervise in the fleet hospital unit, DePolo received 180-day temporary orders to Fleet Hospital 5 and believes he will resume his regular duties when he returns from the Persian Gulf. Like his people, he doesn't know exactly when he will return home.

One corpsman who knows what waits for him in the overseas desert is Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Tim Doering. While waiting for his Military Airlift Command flight to Saudi Arabia, Doering related some close-to-real-world scenarios to his shipmates, based on his fleet hospital training in San Diego in 1986.

"First thing we'll do after putting up

the hospital's 150 units is calibrate the equipment," he anticipated. "We'll be eating Meals Ready-to-Eat for a week until we get the mess tent put up."

Mayo and DePolo agreed that lack of comforts and hard work are the normal order of the day for men and women of the fleet hospital. DePolo projected 12-hour shifts and a duty rotation of 13 days on, and one day off. While in Saudi Arabia, hospital staff sailors sleep in eight- to 12-man tents without air conditioning. Showers are limited to once a week and clothes-washing to once a month.

"During training, there were two trailers, with six showers and six toilets each, one for the men and one for the women," Doering said, adding that he hoped a few more porta-potties would be scattered throughout the 28-acre camp. He expected that in Saudi Arabia, as during fleet hospital training, there would be set times for head calls, and that people would be limited

Learning to share everything and to work as a team are vital to survival.





to those times except for emergencies.

For the approximately 300 women of the fleet hospital, who make up 45 percent of the deployed hospital staff, lack of electricity, having to fit all belongings for six months into one duffle bag, wearing combat fatigues and combat boots daily, add up to a lot less attention to traditional feminine concerns. That's the observation of HM3 Linda Tesnar, speaking from her experiences during two weeks of hospital training last year.

"All of us [women] are going to have to learn to overcome a lot of things — doing without curling irons or make-up, sleeping on a cot, living in close quarters," said Tesnar, who will wear her long blonde hair pinned up. She did pack two luxuries in her seabag; perfume and deodorant. "They told us not to bring deodorant or anti-perspirant because your body needs to sweat in the high temperatures, but with only one bath a week, I packed deodorant anyway," Tesnar said.

Tesnar said she was never more grateful for her two weeks of fleet hospital training than when she received the call, in early August at 2:30 a.m., to be ready to deploy with the fleet hospital within 24-hours. She woke up her husband, who got out of the Navy a few

months ago, and told him the news.

"Others who haven't received the training don't know what to expect," said Tesnar. "I don't think they have any idea what they are getting into. One of the nurses asked me if she should bring her dress uniform and her high-heeled shoes. They don't realize there's nowhere to wear that stuff. We are going to be just as tired and grubby as the men."

"About one-fourth of the staff have received two-weeks of training. Those who haven't trained are prepared to learn from those who have, and those who attended the training know they will have to teach the rest," said De-Polo.

Each fleet hospital sailor was issued three sets of camouflage fatigues and desert boots. The fatigues are identical to those worn by the Army, Air Force and Marines, and in order to outfit his troops on short notice, LCDR Jim Banks, who headed up the medical mobilization planning, called all three service branches. He and his team of five people also worked day and night for about a week, spending the first few days calling everyone assigned to the fleet hospital staff — some of whom were on leave hundreds of miles away. Then, Banks and his crew oversaw

The reality of deployment set in when FH 5 staff members lined up in fatigues.

outfitting and transportation for the mobilization forces.

"When FH5 was first put on alert, we had no knowledge of when the team would deploy within 24 hours," Banks said. "We had a large supply of cammies on hand, but not enough to outfit whole units." Banks' staff called every supply center on the East Coast. "The hardest item to find was boots in women's small sizes — for that we had to call on the Army," he reported.

When people assigned to the hospital saw their shipmates lined up in long queues for camouflage fatigues, everything suddenly got real and very serious, said 5-foot tall HM3 Alison Hunt. She was on call for the first 10 days in size six boots until her size four-and-a-halves came in. Hunt, a medical repair technician, said she "didn't like it in the least," when she first learned she had to deploy — especially since she had forgotten completely that section of her reporting-aboard briefing when she was told she was assigned to Fleet Hospital 5. But when she put on her camouflage uniform, she said, and got used to the idea, her attitude changed. "I'm ready to go over there with the

guys and do what I was trained for," Hunt said. "I'll stay as long as they need me."

Mayo admits that people of all ranks had similar first reactions. "Comments of a few of the senior people I talked to ranged from 'This is just another drill, isn't it?' to excuses why they couldn't do it," Mayo said. "Fortunately, the overwhelming majority were eager to go, and some people even complained to me that they didn't understand why they had been left out."

To help ease the emotional distress that naturally occurs during such a quick transition, DePolo said he and Banks immediately began to shape the deployment force into a closely-knit team, holding briefings that included everyone slated to go. The briefings covered topics ranging from power of attorney procedures and family support systems to Arabian customs and what the sailors could bring along for recreation.

One major command undertaking was having everyone assigned to the mobilization make out a will. "The hospital legal office was here the entire night the first day of the call up, preparing for this," said Banks. Later, more lawyers were brought in from the Navy Legal Services Office in Norfolk.

DePolo stressed that life in the desert won't be altogether grim, at least not if he has anything to say about it. "Our recreation people have brought board games, volleyballs, baseballs, books and magazines," he said. "We even have barbers going with us. Once the hospital is built, we'll have our own small store where the sailors can buy personal items, and eventually a cantina for snacks and sodas," he hopes.

Sailors were allowed to bring audio tapes and personal tape players, as long as they use batteries to run them. "We

told everyone to bring several books and their military course work," said DePolo. "If 700 people each bring two books, you have quite a library."

Fleet hospital personnel waiting for the MAC flight Aug. 31, said they had everything from art supplies to playing cards to hand-held "acey-deucey" games. Spades appeared to be the game of choice, by popular vote, and several games were ongoing as people waited for their flight. Already, the tightly-knit team attitude that DePolo insisted on was evident.

Many people brought their diaries. HM2 Keith Charles was already writing in his, before his plane had left the United States, "I'm going to write a book about this," said Charles, who says he writes in his journal each day. Charles, a radiology technician, was another who believed he knew a little of what to expect in the field, having

served a tour with the Fleet Marine Force.

"We're sticking with him," said Charles' boss, LCDR Mike Dwyer, a radiologist who has been in the Navy only a few weeks.

This interdependency and team spirit was also observed by HM2 Keith Oborsky, a friend and co-worker of Tesnar. "A lot of people who didn't get along together — didn't even speak to each other — are friends now," he said. "They're going to have to be — we are going to need each other, just like in boot camp."

"For example, someone is going to bring clothespins in their sea bag, and someone else is going to forget. But we'll get through it and come back home if we stick together." □

Lefler is assigned to NIRA Det 4, Norfolk.



Saying, "goodbye," to the one you love when going away for an indefinite period of time is never easy.

A line in the sand

The Navy-Marine Corps team at work.

Story by JO2(SW) Joe Bartlett, photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

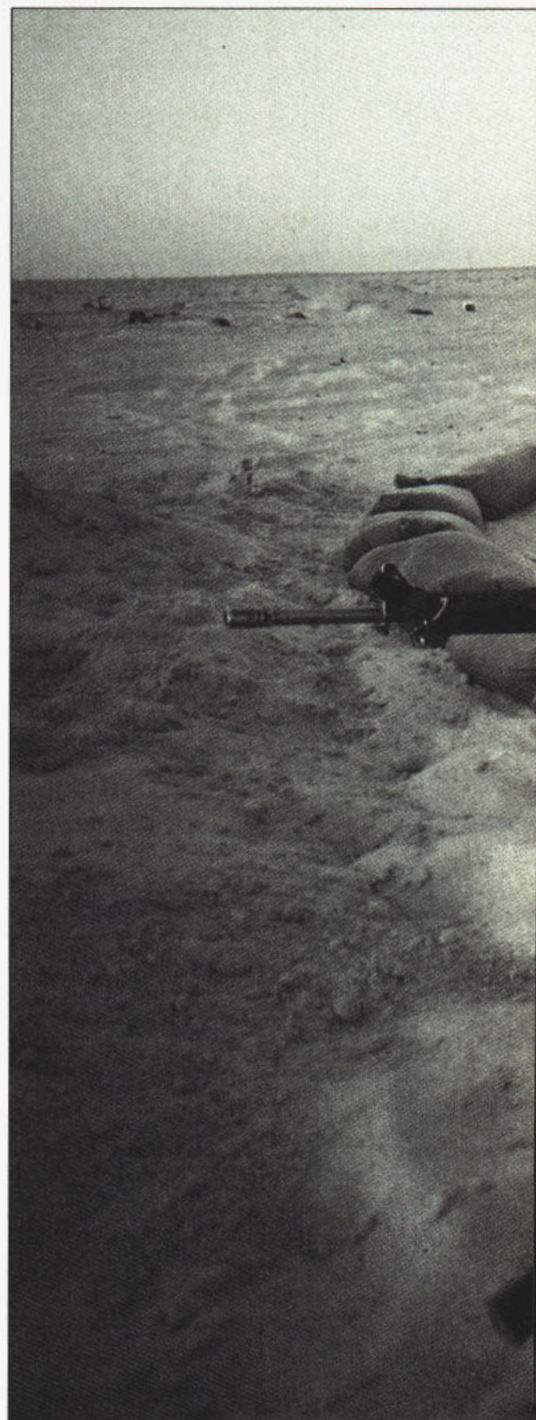
Racing through a dune-filled landscape at breakneck speeds under a blazing sun is an average American's picture of fun in the deserts of California or Nevada. But to more than 30,000 sailors and Marines of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force supporting *Operation Desert Shield*, "dune-hopping" is just a small part of the rigorous mission to deter Iraqi aggression in the Saudi Arabian desert.

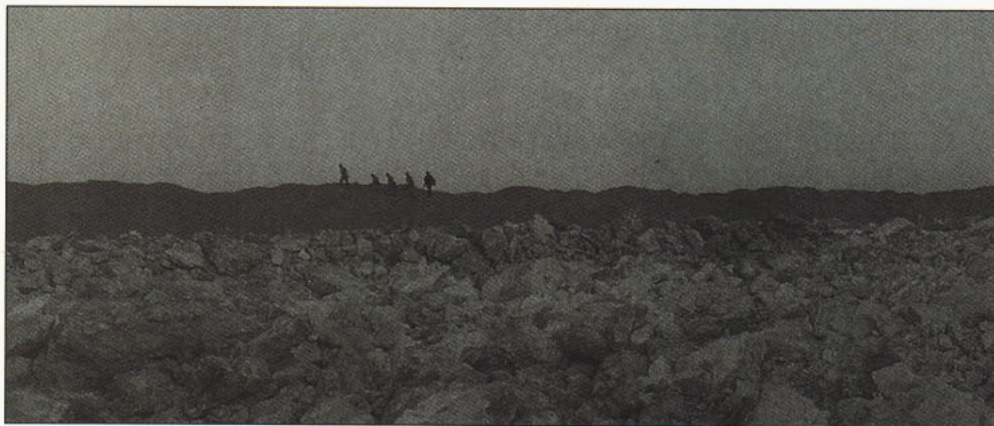
As one integral part of the three-pronged U.S. presence in the Middle East, the Navy-Marine Corps team provides the firepower for freedom during interception of Iraq-bound shipping in the waters of the Persian

Gulf, Red Sea and Gulf of Oman; control of the air from four carrier battle groups' tactical aircraft scouring the skies around the clock; and a formidable deterrent force in and around Saudi Arabia.

Navy hospital corpsmen and Marines work side-by-side in the desert sand fortifying positions, conducting tactical maneuvers and battling 130-degree temperatures with their wits and water — a lot of water. The high-tempo routine requires a constant intake of that precious clear fluid taken for granted back home — up to 10 quarts a day per man.

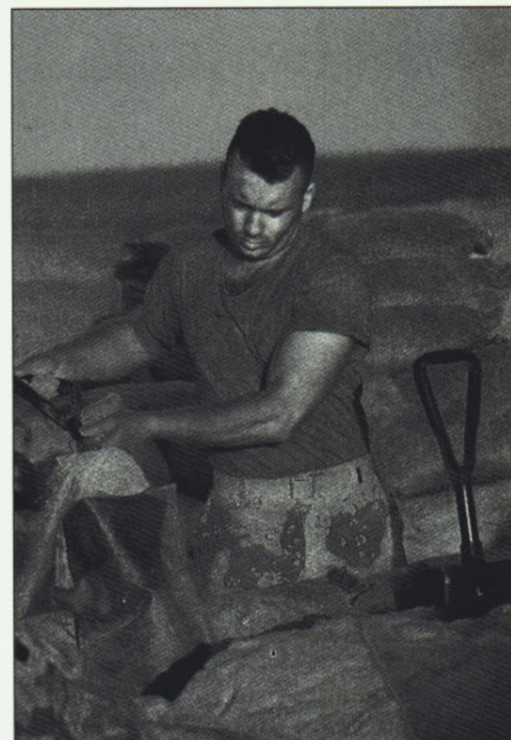
"We're landlocked in a great desert





Opposite page: Helicopters mark the arrival of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia. Left and below: Marines patrol the desert perimeter, dig in and don their protective gear.





Left: Hospital corpsmen discuss casualty strategy and plans. Above: When hostilities are possible, everyone, including the corpsmen, helps fill sandbags.

sea," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Hugh McGeehan, a Camp Pendleton-based corpsman supporting hundreds of "sand warriors" in the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines' (3/9) battalion aid station in the force's "front line." "Controlling the water supply is a real problem because it boils in the sun — and nobody likes to drink hot water because it just doesn't taste that great."

McGeehan, two Navy doctors and more than 20 other corpsmen augment the Navy medical team at the aid station while more than 30 company

corpsmen originally assigned to medical billets stretching from Key West, Fla., to San Francisco provide assistance to the "desert rats" of 3/9.

That assistance comes into play as the Marines train hard on the sun-baked sand. Tactical war games using infantrymen, amphibious assault vehicles and highly-mobile, multi-wheeled vehicles — armed high-tech dune buggies — are practiced hour after hour in the wastelands that cover the world's largest oil reserves. As they fight an invisible foe, the waves of heat take their inevitable toll.

"If they're training hard, we usually get a lot of heat casualties," said HM3 Lance Cleveland during a game of spades under the dust-covered canopy disguising the camp's aid station. "Since the water boils, they don't like to drink it, so pretty soon they start dropping from dehydration."

Dehydration hits hardest during chemical warfare training, when the Marines spend hours each day inside heavy Chemical-Biological-Radiological suits topped with zipped-down protective masks. Strenuous training while wearing the protective gear doubles the requirement for water to cope with the stark environment. That constant training is paying off by acclimating Marines to their arid surroundings.

"The more we get acclimatized, it seems like we need less water," said Marine Corporal Michael Veers, a



communications specialist in one of 3/9's HMMVs. "It's starting to feel more like Twentynine Palms [California] every day instead of Saudi Arabia."

After a full day of maneuvers and warfare training, a hot meal of franks, rice, chipped beef and scrambled eggs is trucked in from the rear — a welcome break from the not-so-tasty Meals-Ready-to-Eat. As the sun sets, the nightly task of digging in moves with fervor.

With the moon casting an eerie light on the featureless sea of dunes, the balmy night provides cover for the Marines as they dig deep. It's back-breaking effort to build defensive positions around the camp's perimeter to the north. Infantrymen who forge the front line of defense spend their nights digging to fortify the camp's security against aggression and the possibility of terrorist attacks.

As they dig, Navy corpsmen assigned to perimeter companies man shovels alongside their sand mates, filling countless sandbags to strengthen bunkers and foxholes that dot the camp's forward boundary. One company commander said his men would fill nearly 100,000 bags with the Saudi kingdom's largest resource before they were done.

HM2 Patrick Thiry, a Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas sailor aug-

menting the 3/9 as a company corpsman, helped fill bag after bag while keeping a close watch on his charges for signs of heat stress or strain.

"When we're humping it out here, people get all sorts of knee strains and blisters from the sand along with the effects from heat stress," he said.

Serving his second tour with a Marine brigade, Thiry and his counterparts along the perimeter are the first stage of medical support for the force, providing on-site attention to their charges before sending them back to work or for further treatment. Thiry said the challenging role he plays in *Desert Shield* is a heavy, but rewarding responsibility. "Three weeks ago I didn't know any of these guys and they took me right in as the 'doc.' I like that feeling."

The men of 3/9 work on constructing their haven as headlights from a nearby highway creep along, glowing across the dimly lighted horizon. Marine Captain Neil Gordon, commander of 3/9's India Company, said that it's hard staying prepared for war while life goes on in the desert around them. Bedouin sheepherders and camel traders roam the landscape around the camp following their escape from Iraqi-held territory to the north. The constant movement keeps Marines on watch alert, while their buddies continue to excavate.



Left: Barren terrain provides a challenge to forces from all nations. Above: U.S. personnel take precautions from blowing sand.

"Security is something that's difficult and ongoing," Gordon said. "In no time this situation could be a maximum, high-intensity operation, and we're ready for it."

The security effort is aided by Marines of the surveillance and target acquisition teams that patrol forward of the perimeter throughout the night. The three- to five-man teams blend with the dunes as they stealthily monitor all movement on the moonlit sand using state-of-the-art night vision gear. Hunched over in a "sniper's crawl," they roam the desert night-scape, searching for signs of suspicious activity that could threaten home base.

While the moon moves slowly across the star-filled desert sky, the STA teams keep alert by "dipping" coffee grounds between cheek and gum as they move from dune to dune — returning to the base camp before the sun threatens exposure of their positions.

The terrorist threat and heat aren't the only enemies the Marines face. Cooler nights bring out the stranger



Marine Corps tanks draw a real line in the sand.

with a smirk. "The other rumor is that [Saddam] Hussein will attack on the next full moon (that very night, of course) just like the invasion of Kuwait."

McGeehan blamed the rumor mill on the boredom that sets in during down-time between rigorous training and constant digging. For the most part, the more colorful the rumor, the greater the entertainment value — just one more way to beat the heat in Saudi Arabia.

Mail and week-old newspapers provide a shot in the arm and a smile on the dusty faces of the Navy-Marine Corps team in the Saudi desert. News from home is filled with support from family and friends, breaking up the sometimes monotonous job of serving with a forward combat element.

With their thirst for word from home quenched, morale of the men in 3/9 stays high while they toil in the Saudi desert. As weeks of hard work and training shape their forward outpost, the knowledge that they're backed by both family and country bolsters their resolve to serve capably in whatever capacity required.

"We've come a long way since arriving here a couple of weeks ago," said 3/9's Operations Officer Marine Major Walter Casebolt. "We came here with just our bodies, seven vehicles and our packs ... I feel better every day because I've got more and more to build with and more to fight with."

Whether conflict erupts or deterrence prevails, *Operation Desert Shield's* Navy-Marine Corps team of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in the Saudi Arabian desert is there, ready for anything an enemy might throw at them. As for the corpsmen, Gordon summed up the feelings of every Marine in their charge. "They give us great support out here," he said. "We never leave home without them." □

Bartlett is assigned to Navy Internal Relations Activity, Washington, D.C.

forms of desert life that could injure the unwary. Horned snakes, tiny scorpions and snapping beetles take monstrous form in the macabre wasteland as Marines carefully "check their six" and shake out their boots to avoid an unpleasant surprise from these desert denizens.

The rigors of life in the desert are broken up by a bumpy ride every 10 days to a larger facility some 60 kilometers away. Here the desert warrior can enjoy a shower, drink chilled water and get some needed rest for a day or two before heading back to the endless job of defending against possible Iraqi aggression.

One of the biggest problems for the Marines and sailors in forward positions is the lack of news, leading to a rumor network that runs throughout the ranks. "Once you've been out here a couple of weeks, out of touch with the world, you start hearing all kinds of rumors around here," said Cleveland. "You hear so many different ones you just can't tell if there's any truth to them or not."

The latest tale to hit the sand describes Iraq's latest secret weapon — the "Blue Death." "It's a Biological/Chemical agent the Iraqis supposedly invented that will eat the gas mask right off your face," said McGeehan

Middle East medical

The stage is set for casualty care

Story by JO2(SW) Joe Bartlett, photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

When the call came for *Desert Shield* to move into motion, Navy medical personnel from around the world sprang into action, grabbing stethoscopes and satchels to prepare for the worst by offering the best care for warriors in the desert and on the sea.

On the front line, armed with only a pistol to protect their patients and myriad medical supplies, corpsmen from medical facilities across the United States rallied to support Marines on the sand. These company corpsmen act as the first rung of a four-step medical ladder established to manage casualties should *Desert Shield's* mission turn to combat. As platoons dig deep in the sand, 'desert docs' tend their charges, watching for heat casualties and fatigue, ready to act should the scorching environment take its toll.

"We try to cool them down and get them to the rear as soon as possible," said Hospitalman Robert Ochoa, a corpsman working with Marines near the Saudi-Kuwait border. Ochoa said cooling a patient with water that boils in the sun creates problems, but one thing company corpsmen are known for is making do with what little they have.

The first days in the Saudi desert brought the desert docs plenty of patients struggling to stay cool in the blazing sun. Ochoa said that the Marines adapted quickly, as Marines always do, and the incidence of heat casualties has dropped to nearly zero.

These corpsmen are also the key to initial care in a chemical attack, assisting Marines in proper care and use of chemical warfare suits, detection of contaminants and distribution of antidotes for the toxins they might face. Should

combat erupt, Ochoa and his counterparts would act under fire to resuscitate wounded and treat injuries until a litter team arrived to transport the patient from the firing line.

The litter team leads to the second rung of the medical

ladder, the battalion aid station. At the BAS, casualties are triaged by corpsmen, nurses and doctors and then treated. Two Navy doctors and more than 20 corpsmen man the BAS, ready to perform minor surgery, treat for shock and provide other medical care under the dust-covered camouflage netting. More serious cases would be evacuated by helicopter or truck to the next rung on the medical ladder — often the fleet hospital.

Located near the Saudi coastline, the sprawling 28-acre

Fleet Hospital 5 sprouted from nearly 450 international standardized organizational containers lifted from the maritime prepositioning ships that arrived in Saudi Arabia Aug. 15. Two construction battalion units from Norfolk and Oceana, Va., arrived soon after to begin setting up the hospital.

In less than two weeks, the Seabees and Navy medical and support personnel from Naval Hospital Portsmouth, Va., completed construction of the forward-deployed 500-bed facility — complete with operating rooms, intensive-care units, radiological facilities, laboratories, treatment rooms and, of course, plenty of ward space for patient care. Each piece of the fleet hospital puzzle is interlocked, offering patients air conditioned comfort in the harsh desert surroundings. The Seabees remain on hand as the hospital's Public Works Department.



USNS *Comfort* litter team receives a casualty from the Saudi desert.



"Seabees are the first to arrive and the last to leave," said CAPT Alan W. Frost, fleet hospital program manager. "The place won't work without them."

The fleet hospital isn't your typical MASH unit portrayed by television, where medical personnel cheat death using archaic instruments under inadequate lighting while ingesting bone-dry martinis and terrible food. It's a pocket of sanity in an environment that attacks every individual with strength-draining intensity, even before the prospect of combat is considered. The simple comforts and excellent care provided by the fleet hospital to ailing Marines and sailors are a welcome respite from the hazards of readying for combat.

Fleet Hospital 5 can accept hundreds of casualties, caring for wounded with technology that approaches the most advanced medical facilities back home. More than 900 of the Navy's best medical men and women are at their stations around the clock while running mock casualty situations to keep their readiness edge. Training is constant, with classes on medical procedures, chemical and biological warfare defense and Arab customs and history being conducted in each of the facility's 14 wards.

CDR (Dr.) Robert Carnes, head of the fleet hospital's anesthesia department, said the 'desert docs' were surprised when they realized the equipment they would be using was such high quality. "It's an excellent setup. Almost everything we've got here is top of the line and straight out of the box," he said. "We're operational and ready to go."

Should a casualty situation occur, Carnes and his staff



Left: Chemical warfare training can result in heat casualties for "desert docs." Above: *Comfort* waits in the Persian Gulf.

would man the hospital's expandable ISO-containers that hold three operating rooms. Each operating room is equipped with two stations that provide for six simultaneous major surgeries — more than most facilities in the states can offer.

Fleet Hospital 5 and its Army equivalent, located in another strategic location, are the key to immediate in-country emergency medical care. Definitive care is also available nearby from the Navy's hospital ships — USNS *Mercy* (T-AH 19) and USNS *Comfort* (T-AH 20) — the other major elements of the Middle East medical ladder.

Armed with only a giant red cross on each side, *Comfort* and *Mercy* steamed to the Middle East to provide the service their names represent. The Navy's top medical and support personnel from medical facilities on both coasts readied for sea within hours of the president's deployment order to provide warriors from all four services advanced treatment near the battlefield.



Left: An independent duty corpsman aboard USS *Flint* (AE 32) sews up an injured finger. Below: HM3 Kevin Cannon performs tests in one of *Comfort*'s high-tech laboratories that are unavailable to company corpsmen in the field.

"It's been a great challenge getting folks from 32 separate commands with diverse missions to work together as a team providing prime medical treatment to front line forces," said CAPT (Dr.) Roger J. Pentzien, who commands *Comfort*'s medical team. "Medical ships used to be merely ambulances where the quality of care wasn't that high. That's not the case anymore." They are floating hospitals capable of delivering sophisticated intensive trauma care unmatched anywhere in the world.

Pentzien explained that his crew of experts takes its mission seriously, training endlessly in chemical injury and burns, advanced trauma, life support systems and casualty triage to keep sharp. With both *Comfort* and *Mercy* able to accept hundreds of patients, the hospital ships are key players in the chess game of *Desert Shield* medical support.

Following evacuation to *Comfort* or *Mercy*, patients would normally remain aboard for treatment and release within seven days. Those cases requiring further care would be medevaced to facilities in Europe or back in CONUS.

Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Thomas Webb, an independent duty corpsman from Annapolis, Md., augmenting *Comfort*'s medical staff, said the presence of the hospital ships in-theater brings a calming influence to troops in the desert and sailors at sea. "They need to know that there are people out here who can, and want to, take care of them," Webb said. "It's good for the kids ashore to know that. That's the reason we're here."

Hospitalman Apprentice Tracy Davis, a cardiology technician aboard *Comfort*, described his feelings about being part of *Desert Shield* by echoing the sentiments of the ship's medical staff.

"If there's a war, I feel like I've got a lot of friends out there in the desert," Davis said. "If something happens to them I want to be able to help."

From the desert to D.C., the Navy medical ladder's steps are lined with top-notch professionals, ready to spin into



high gear should the Middle East crisis turn to conflict. With thousands of Navy medical personnel in the desert, at medical facilities in the region and at sea, the stage is set for the best casualty care in the world. □

Bartlett is assigned to Navy Internal Relations Activity, Washington, D.C.





Control of the sea

Story by JO2(SW) Joe Bartlett,
photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

President Bush's Aug. 8 order for the largest deployment of U.S. forces in 25 years posed a great challenge—to prepare for war halfway around the world. Control of nearly 250,000 square miles of sea lanes in and around the Middle East transformed the U.S. mission from monitoring U.S.-flagged ships to enforcement of U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

USS *Robert G. Bradley* (FFG 49) had already been patrolling Persian Gulf waters since June when Iraq invaded Kuwait. As Saddam Hussein's 100,000-strong army entered Kuwait City Aug. 2, *Bradley* was patrolling the northern waters of the Gulf less than 50 miles from the Kuwait coastline as one of five warships assigned to the Middle East Force.

"We heard pleas for help from Kuwait over the bridge-to-bridge radio over and over again," said LTJG Ted Anderson, *Bradley's* combat systems officer. "It made us realize just how real it was."

Bradley manned battle stations at first word of the Iraqi invasion to guard against possible attack by air or sea. The ship kept close to U.S.-flagged tankers in the area, supporting the ongoing mission to monitor ships under *Operation Earnest Will*. Six days later, *Bradley* became the forward element of *Operation Desert Shield*.

The Navy has maintained a significant presence inside the Persian Gulf since 1949—up to as many as 30 ships during the height of the Iran-Iraq war. But *Desert Shield* brought the largest contingent of sea power since World War II to act as the "tip of the spear" of U.S. policy in the region.

As diplomatic wheels turn to solve the Middle East crisis, lookouts aboard U.S. ships patrolling the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and Red Sea scour the horizon in a constant vigil, eyeing suspect merchant vessels transiting vast shipping lanes. The main mission of these patrol ships: stop Iraq's economic lifeblood from flowing

through Middle Eastern waters.

The complexities of the interdiction/interception mission are vividly displayed in the combat information center of USS *Taylor* (FFG 50), where technicians huddle around high-tech instrument displays tracking each "skunk" until lookouts around the ship spot the unidentified vessel.

"When we find a vessel that hasn't been queried before, we make an approach to them so that they know who we are," said LT Stephen Davis, *Taylor's* combat systems officer. "Then we call them on the bridge-to-bridge VHF radio to ascertain what ship they are, where they are coming from, where they're bound and what kind of cargo they have on board.

"If we determine that they're not a threat, not bound for a belligerent's border and not carrying war goods, then we wave them on their way," Davis said. *Taylor* has averaged about 10 challenges daily, according to Davis—a process that became more determined following U.N. approval of military force to ensure merchants comply with the sanctions.

Davis said that merchant masters have been cooperative with the queries, well aware of the next step in the interdiction operation—warning shots across the bow or disabling shots to the vessel's rudder. "Generally, by that time they're being more cooperative," he said. "They don't want to go through all that business."

Cooperation hasn't always been the case, as *Bradley* became the second ship to fire warning shots across the bow of an Iraqi tanker Aug. 18. After more than two hours of unsuccessful negotiations via radio with the Iraqi tanker *Babr Gurgur's* master, CDR Kevin J. Cosgriff, *Bradley's* commanding officer, ordered Gunner's Mate (Guns) 2nd Class David S. Hall to fire the shots to convince the ship to divert its course. Hall squeezed the trigger of *Bradley's* 25mm chain gun to place three rounds 200 yards ahead of the merchant. The shots failed to convince the tanker's master, and *Bradley* fol-



Above: Aboard USS *Robert G. Bradley* night vision equipment allows bridge watches to identify merchants. Previous Page: IFCN Thomas Luttenegger scans the horizon for mines and merchants in the Persian Gulf.

lowed the vessel throughout the night, "handing off" the chase to *Taylor* in the Gulf of Oman.

Bradley's actions demonstrated U.S. resolve to enforce the sanctions. "It was the sort of signal we wanted to send at that time," Cosgriff explained to his crew.

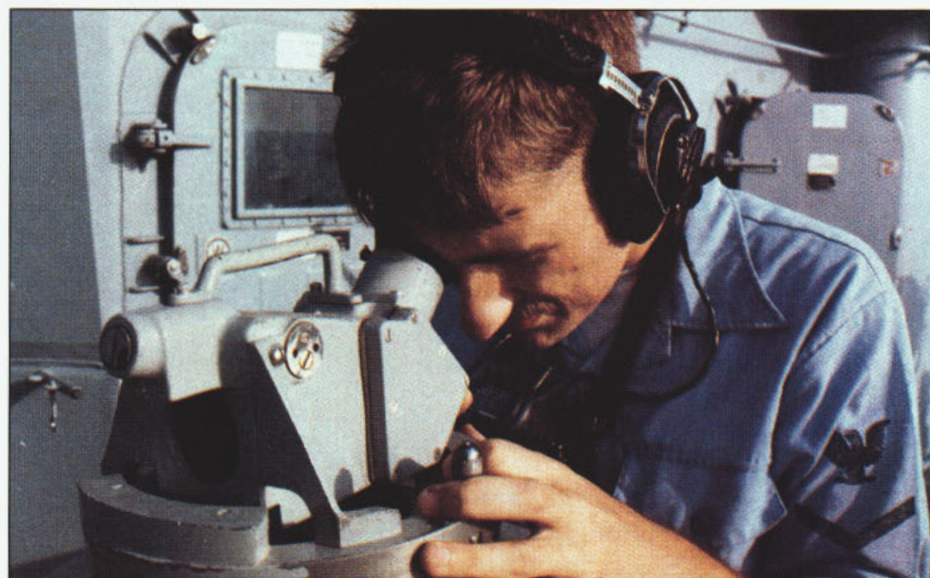
That signal became stronger in the weeks following the first two cases of warning shots by *Bradley* and the frigate USS *Reid* (FFG 30). In the early morning hours of Sept. 4 in the Gulf of Oman, CAPT James A. Reid brought the crew of USS *Goldsborough* (DDG 20) to general quarters for the first boarding of an Iraqi vessel.

Tension-filled hours followed as a boarding team led by *Goldsborough's* newly-embarked Coast Guard law enforcement detachment scaled the Basra-bound Iraqi merchant *Zanobia's* accommodation ladder to inspect the ship's cargo and manifests for violation of the sanction guidelines. *Goldsborough's* four-man LEDet team is one of 10 Coast Guard interdiction units embarked aboard Navy ships during *Desert Shield*. These experts have been essential, not only in actual boardings, but also in providing training to Navy boarding teams.



"We had created a ship's boarding team, trained hard and thought we knew exactly what to do during a boarding," said LCDR David Paterson, *Goldsborough's* executive officer. "The LEDet hadn't been aboard but a few minutes when we realized that the Coast Guard had corporate knowledge we needed badly." Paterson acted as assistant boarding officer while Coast Guard LTJG John Gallagher led the way aboard the Iraqi merchant.

"The tension level when we first boarded was extremely high," said Chief Fire Control Technician (SW) Roland Dixon, one of six *Goldsborough* boarding team members who



Above: A lookout aboard *USS Taylor* sights a "skunk's" bearing in the Persian Gulf. **Left:** STG2 Robert Johnson mans a 25mm chain gun while STG3 Dan Gelaghty spots for his gunner aboard *USS Antietam*.

— enough to supply the entire population of Iraq for a month — and the Iraqi merchant was requested to divert his course to another port outside the Gulf. The master was unwilling to divert, and the decision was passed down through the U.S. chain of command to take control of the ship.

Gallagher informed the master, and after shouting defiantly the Iraqi captain finally fell silent and relinquished control to the boarding team. "There was a conflict of wills there," Paterson said. "But we had the visible means of carrying out our will and he didn't. The nice thing was, we never had to resort to that."

Goldsborough crewmen were brought aboard to take *Zanoobia* to the port of Muscat, Oman, where Iraqi diplomats boarded and advised the master to return to his point of origin. Seaman David Lee Handshoe, who took over *Zanoobia's* helm during the 40-hour diversion, said his adrenalin was pumping as he steered for the Omani coast. "It's a little exciting to know that you're part of history," he said. "When we got back aboard we were all pretty drained, but very proud."

The effort to enforce U.N. sanctions against Iraq brought U.S. and Austra-

lian forces together in the Gulf of Oman Sept. 14, marking the first multinational boarding of an Iraqi vessel.

The boarding of the Iraqi-owned tanker *Al Fao* was the final step in a process that had dragged on for nearly 24 hours — a process that successfully stopped the Basra-bound merchant following warning shots fired from *USS Brewton* (FF 1086) and the Australian frigate *HMAS Darwin* (F 04). The boarding marked two other milestones — the first to follow warning shots and the first on the open sea in the dead of night.

The 438-foot U.S. warship drew within visual range and trailed the suspect tanker in the early hours. CDR Craig Kennedy, *Brewton's* commanding officer, brought his 278-man crew to battle stations at first light and began the scripted procedure for querying the master's intentions. After hours of exchanges via radio, *Al Fao's* master still refused to stop for inspection of his cargo holds.

Constant communication up the U.S. and Australian chains of command kept military leaders apprised of the situation throughout the operation. When it became apparent that *Al Fao* would not agree to stop, the decision was made to proceed to the next step in the interception procedure.

STG3 Emmanuel Bolds, a sound-powered phone operator on *Brewton's* .50-caliber machine gun mount, relayed his captain's order to fire 100 rounds across *Al Fao's* bow to his gun-

supported the LEDet during the boarding.

"Chief Dixon really came to the rescue on *Zanoobia*," said Chief Sonar Technician (Surface) (SW) Lennart M. Hoffmann, explaining Dixon's knowledge of Moslem customs after two years in Saudi Arabia. Dixon's awareness of the Islamic ritual of private prayer four times daily was a key factor in keeping the tension level aboard *Zanoobia* to a minimum. "His experience from Saudi helped both us and the Coast Guard guys. If we wouldn't have allowed prayer, the situation would have elevated greatly," Hoffman said.

Zanoobia's holds carried only tea



AW1(AC) John Duncan operates the anti-submarine warfare console aboard an HSL-45, Detachment 1, SH-60 helicopter embarked aboard *Bradley* in the Persian Gulf.

ner, STG3 Gene Whetsel, who tore up the surf 100 yards ahead of the vessel. The merchant disregarded the warning, continuing to steam as before, until *Darwin* followed her American counterpart's lead with short bursts of fire ahead of the target. *Al Fao's* master suddenly slowed his craft in the calm waters and both warships launched their boarding teams.

Gallagher and his four-man LEDet had arrived aboard *Brewton* a few days after the *Zanoobia* boarding and were once again involved in a historic first during *Desert Shield*. A 13-man team of four Coast Guardsmen, five *Brewton* personnel and four Australians climbed more than 60 feet to the vessel's accommodation ladder and onto the tanker's main deck.

As Gallagher and the boarding team left their boats, *Darwin's* helicopter lit up *Al Fao's* ladder with its searchlight. A veteran of more than 500 drug interdiction boarding missions in the Caribbean and Atlantic, Gallagher and his Hampton Roads-based team members explained that this boarding was tension-filled because of the measures taken to stop the vessel.

"Going through the boat was probably the most stressful part because you didn't know what was behind every door," said LEDet member Quartermaster 2nd Class James Lecomte, who led Australian counterparts through the sweep of *Al Fao's* holds. "We didn't know if it was going to be a regular boarding or if someone would be waiting for us."

"It was a great challenge," said LCDR Pat McMillin, *Brewton's* executive officer. "We knew that the threat had been upgraded because the vessel had only stopped because of force."

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class William Gilbert, LEDet member in charge of security during boardings, said the Navy-Coast Guard cooperative effort has been a learning experience for both sides.

"It's comforting, in the short time we have to prepare, to see the behavior these guys display as you go over the gunwale," Gilbert said. "I felt confident that we could depend on them if the situation turned on us."

"The 'powers that be' have gone to great lengths to have confidence in the knowledge that we're not an assault team," said Quartermaster 1st Class Ken Shubick, a *Brewton* boarding team member. Shubick said the detachment's expertise and prior ship's self-defense force training stressed the use of minimum force for maximum results. "We're not going over there to swing across signal halyards with sabres in our teeth—to hack and slash until they stop, leaving a burning hulk," he said.

After a two-hour search by the boarding team and a thorough inspection of *Al Fao's* manifests, the vessel was confirmed empty and sent on its way to the Iraqi port of Basra. *Brewton's* crew returned to normal routine after 17 hours at GQ.

Brewton crewmen acknowledged their important contributions, adding

that they are constantly alert during a boarding scenario to avoid an incident.

"It's a touchy situation," said Machinist's Mate 1st Class Timothy Eckert, a boarding team member. "If we accidentally treat them wrong or use too much force, the possibility of us moving Hussein's trigger finger is something that's on our minds at all times."

While merchant ships may not pose a threat to U.S. warships, sailors in the Middle East remain poised for any contingency through constant training during patrol operations. "The main thing we try to steer clear of while we're out here standing watches or just walking down a passageway, is an attitude of complacency," said Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Chris Dietrich outside USS *Taylor's* 76mm gun mount.

That vigilance can take its toll on watchstanders aboard Navy ships as the massive mission of controlling these vital shipping lanes continues, but sailors are primed and ready to respond. "Every time I start thinking that things out here are bad, I think about the guys out there in the desert," said Gas Turbine Systems Technician 2nd Class Gerry Mayhew on *Taylor's* sun-baked flight deck.

Taylor's Commanding Officer, CDR Kevin P. Green, said the Navy's role during *Desert Shield*—enforcing sanctions while remaining prepared for war—is a demanding one, but not without its rewards. He echoed the sentiments of every commanding officer in Middle East waters.

"The fact that what we're doing here is a clearly stated U.S. mission with the support of the entire world makes it a lot easier for everybody," Green said. □

Bartlett is assigned to Navy Internal Relations Activity, Washington, D.C.

Control of the air

Story by JO2(SW) Joe Bartlett, photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

Operation Desert Shield brought American might swarming to the desert sands and turbulent waters of the Middle East, but the nearly 175,000-strong U.S. contingent of land and sea power realizes that control of the *air* is a major factor in the *Desert Shield* equation.

Iraq's daily ship and land attacks were virtually unchallenged during the latter phases of their eight-year war with Iran. After gaining control of the air, Iraq dealt serious damage to Iranian industry and population centers, setting the Gulf ablaze with smoldering remnants of merchant shipping slowly descending beneath pools of precious oil.

To ensure a successful conclusion to the current Gulf crisis, (should hostilities erupt), the United States and other nations supplying air power to the Middle East must excel in three war-fighting areas: support of ground forces during amphibious and land offensives, surgically precise bombing missions and detection of airborne assault of naval and land forces.

As U.S. air assets perform a significant number of training missions daily practicing joint-service and multinational operations, Iraq's air power sits relatively idle to avoid the need for spare parts resulting from intensive flight operations. Those spare parts would be nearly impossible to obtain with ships of 22 nations enforcing the embargo of cargo that violates United Nations sanctions.

RADM Tony Less, assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans, Policy and Operations) and former commander of Joint Task Force Middle East during the Iran-Iraq war, said that while Iraq tries to husband its aircraft assets, it pays a price in readiness training.

"They're saving assets, but losing readiness," Less said. "If they want to keep their pilots trained and ready, they

need a logistics chain to support a significant training effort. They're feeling the pinch on parts, so they're not going to fly as much as they should to maintain readiness.

"Iraq is clearly not a pushover," Less said, noting Iraq's air capability during his time in the Gulf. "That's why we train hard — to ensure our readiness is high in the difficult desert environment."

Should ground forces engage Iraqi forces in defense of Saudi Arabia, U.S. Air Force and Marine Corps attack aircraft and assault helicopters and Navy aircraft would offer cover and support to counter Iraq's air and armored power. Air Force F-15s and F-16s, Marine Corps F/A 18s, A-6s and AV-8 *Harrier* attack jets and Navy F-14s, FA-18s and A-6s are prepared to battle Iraqi fighter-bombers, while Air Force A-10 tank-killers would take on the responsibility of neutralizing Iraq's massive mechanized forces.

If a coastal assault is ordered, more than 10,000 Marines and 8,000 sailors of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade — the largest landing force formed since the U.S. invasion of

Inchon, Korea, more than 30 years ago — would land on beaches cleared by Marine Corps AV-8 *Harrier* attack jets and assault helicopters from the task force's amphibious platforms.

With ground forces engaged and supported by airborne assets, carrier-based aircraft and land-based counterparts could then conduct precision bombing missions. More than 140 tactical aircraft aboard the aircraft carriers USS *Independence* (CV 62) and USS *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67) are within striking distance of Iraqi strongholds in Kuwait and, if need be, Iraq itself.

Aboard *Independence*, Carrier Air Wing 14 aircraft operate around the clock in support of *Desert Shield*. CDR Dave Nichols, commanding officer of A-6 *Intruder* squadron VA-196 said the all-weather attack aircraft flown by his aviators are perfectly suited for the Middle East mission.

"If there's any bombing done in the theater here, I guar-



Above: On patrol in the Persian Gulf, a Marine Corps AV-8 *Harrier* leaves the amphibious assault ship USS *Nassau* (LHA 4) during flight operations in the Gulf of Oman.



antee the A-6 will be the first airplane to go in and the last to come out," Nichols said. He added that Iraq's formidable buildup of air defense is not impenetrable should his squadron be called upon to act in combat.

"How well the Iraqis actually employ that hardware in combat is another question," Nichols said in *Independence's* ready room 4. "There's a lot of stuff up there, but we have ways to beat it."

For the third variable in the *Desert Shield* air plan, the Navy is using its most technically-advanced cruiser as the heart of its ability to detect and deter an air assault on warships in the Persian Gulf. The *Aegis* cruiser USS *Antietam's* (CG 54) combat information center personnel maintain a 24-hour scan of all air activity in the region.

The airways above Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and other Gulf states pose a heavy challenge in tracking both friend and foe, with as many as 200 aircraft crowding the air corridors at any given time. That massive picture is made manageable by huge display screens that cast a blue hue inside the cruiser's CIC. Clusters of symbols for commer-

cial aircraft crowd and interweave with military "friendlies" on display screens that rival those depicted in science fiction movies.

CDR James Stavridis, *Antietam's* executive officer, described the complexities of his ship's mission in coordinating the Navy's control of the air. "There's a million airplanes up there," he said. "We've got to be ready to sort all that out, and that's what *Aegis* does so well."

RADM Less agreed that the *Aegis*, working in concert with aircraft and ships from other nations, plays a key role in air defense. "There's some major concerns about them [Iraq] coming out to conduct an attack on the ships," Less said. "You get minimal warning time if an aircraft would come in low-level to launch an *Exocet* against you. It's just one of the things you must face when you put your ships in the region. We're confident, however, that we do have the capability to engage very quickly if there's hostile activity."

The role of air power and air control in the Middle East is clearly a major one, according to Less. Our capability to detect aggressors, knock out the opposition's detection capability and

Above: Aviation ordnancemen aboard USS *Independence* (CV 62) grapple with an AIM-7 *Sparrow* missile for an F/A-18 *Hornet* in the Gulf of Oman. **Below:** A *Stinger* missile gunner aboard the frigate USS *Robert G. Bradley* (FFG 49) scans the skies for aggressors inbound from the air.

supply lines, and provide protection for ground forces makes the job considerably easier for the men and machines on the ground and at sea. Less said, "Air power alone will not win, should we have to fight, but it's going to be a significant factor and without it, we could lose." □

Bartlett is assigned to Navy Internal Relations Activity, Washington, D.C.



Spotlight on Excellence

Navy chaplain: In charge of hearts and minds.

Story by JO2(SW) Joe Bartlett, photo by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

The massive movement of man and machine to the Middle East is a complex process — one that takes its toll on the hearts and minds of Marines and sailors in *Desert Shield*. While commanding officers frantically coordinate the operation over thousands of square miles of sand and surf, the state of those hearts and minds becomes the responsibility of one group in particular — the Chaplain's Corps.

"My job is to do whatever I can to help Marines and sailors carry out their mission," said Chaplain (LT) Richard Shivers, operating in Saudi Arabia as part of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. Shivers is one of nearly 50 Navy chaplains supporting some 45,000 sailors and Marines in the Saudi desert during *Desert Shield*. A Catholic priest since 1974, he entered naval service in February 1989 and was assigned to the 24th Marine Amphibious Group in Kaneohe, Hawaii — one of the first units sent to Saudi Arabia following President Bush's Aug. 8 deployment order.

"I think the Marines and sailors who are here are very courageous," Shivers said. He explained how that courage has helped them overcome the obstacles of searing heat and blazing sun. When that courage tires, Shivers said experience on the side of both he and his assistant, Religious Program Specialist 3rd Class Donald Bragg, gives them keen insight into how the Marines and sailors feel. "We can relate to the things they experience because we made the changes too."

Those changes include an 18-hour workday, few hot meals and plenty of not-so-refreshing warm water. Each day in the desert reinforces the stark reality that they could be far from



home for a long time performing an endless routine of readiness training to keep their combat edge honed. Shivers noted the Marines and sailors he serves with find it easier to come to him because he faces the same obstacles. "I had to learn to drink all the water, cope with the sun, deal with the distance from family, no phones and slow mail," he said. "They ask, 'where do you live, sir?' and are reassured when I tell them I'm in the next tent."

Those tents stand empty during religious services performed by Shivers and his colleagues. Marines and sailors look forward to a chance to pray, a quiet moment to reflect on their responsibility and gain spiritual strength 10,000 miles from their families and loved ones.

Shivers said while the duties of a chaplain include those of the local parish priest back home, other challenges provide great satisfaction.

"My role as a priest is to support people in their faith," he said. "As a chaplain, I support everybody in their commitment to the service, their relationship with God and each other. I feel good that I'm able to perform that here."

Chaplain Shivers celebrates Catholic Mass for Marines during *Operation Desert Shield* in Saudi Arabia.

The sands of Saudi Arabia, considered holy by followers of Mohammed around the world, provide a dusty platform for Shivers as he performs more than 20 Catholic masses each week to deployed sailors and Marines. Readings from the Holy Koran sung by Islamic priests drift through the air from mosques throughout the arid landscape during Shivers' services, providing a graphic portrait of two contrasting faiths joined together for a common goal — the defense of Saudi Arabia and the return to normalcy in the Mideast region.

Illegal aggression against a militarily weaker nation brought the power of the United States across the globe, and Shivers is committed to each representative of that power. "I don't get involved in any of the politics," he said. "Each of them swore an oath that brought them here. I just try to help them stay calm, cool, collected, prayerful and filled with God's grace." □

Bartlett is assigned to Navy Internal Relations Activity, Washington, D.C.

MSC delivers

*Moving tanks, trucks and troops
... and turning soldiers into sailors.*

Story and photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

The Navy's strategic sealift response to the current Persian Gulf crisis has been a logistics achievement of enormous proportions. Only days after a no-notice Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the sealift response to a location approximately 9,000 miles from the East Coast of the United States included putting four Maritime Pre-positioning Ships in Saudi Arabia only 10 days after call-up, eight Fast Sealift ships enroute by Aug. 22 and activating and putting to sea two hospital ships capable of treating 1,000 patients each.

Equipment delivered by Military Sealift Command ships in the weeks following the Iraqi invasion totaled more than 123,000 tons, nearly 50,000 tons more than that moved during the first month of the Korean conflict.

Operation Desert Shield has proven to be a joint-service response and nowhere is the multiservice cooperation more evident than aboard the MSC ship USNS *Regulus* (T-AKR 292).

The movement of tanks, troops, trucks and food aboard naval vessels has proven the value and capability of MSC. No other military organization on earth could move the amount of equipment in that short space of time and manage to turn 97 soldiers into sailors. Here is the story of a group of dog-faces who became salty dogs.

Regulus (T-AKR 292) got under way at about 4 p.m., leaving family members of more than 130 soldiers and crew members at the Savannah, Ga., pier. For most of the soldiers, on board to oversee the equipment load out, it would be their first time on a ship — an experience none had expected to have in the Army. As they walked up the steep afterbrow with full backpacks and M-16 rifles, many looked back at their loved ones to wave farewell.

The ship slowly steamed through the port. Along the riverfront, factory workers stopped their routine to cheer and wave goodbye. Some held signs

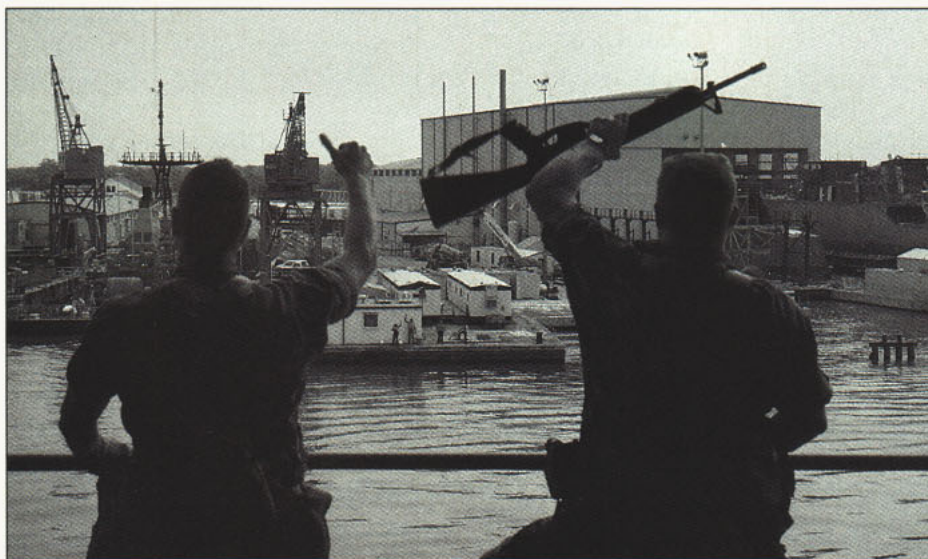
that read, "good luck" and "come back soon." Others waved the American flag and blew kisses.

The show of support inspired the soldiers. They responded with cheers, waving their rifles and American flags and sporting "thumbs up." The sight of land faded as daylight waned, and darkness checked the soldiers' high spirits with reality of their deployment in support of *Operation Desert Shield*.

For the next two weeks, 97 soldiers would learn many things, but none more important than seamanship. How to fight a shipboard fire, dog a hatch and handle a line became top training priorities.

"In this scenario where we are carrying vehicles loaded with full fuel

Below Left: Soldiers return greetings as they deploy. Below: Support for the operation appeared when *Regulus* sailed.



tanks and extra ammunition on board, it's very important that they have at least a basic knowledge of shipboard fire fighting. I've tried to stress that in some drills," expressed CAPT Mark Sliwoski, *Regulus'* commanding officer.

Regulus, one of eight Fast-Sealift ships held in a 72-hour reserve status, is one of the world's largest and fastest vessels. For this particular mission the ship was loaded with more than 700 Army vehicles: M-1 tanks, *Bradley* infantry fighting vehicles, fuel trucks and many other Army vehicles. It took less than 48 hours to load the ship and should take half that time to unload it. With so much ammunition and fuel on board, Sliwoski wanted to make

Below: Heavy equipment is loaded in record time. Right: MSC ships carry vital cargo to Middle East forces.



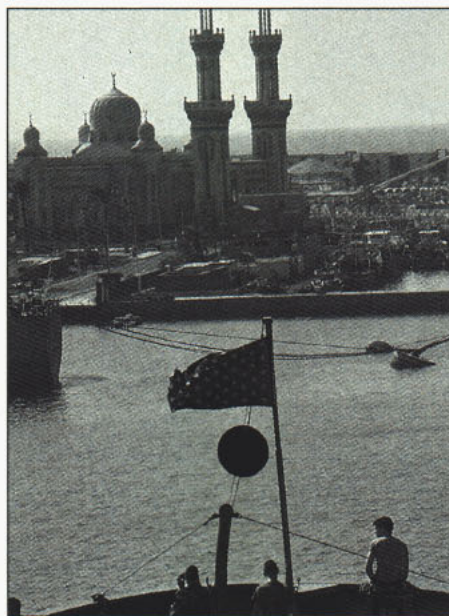
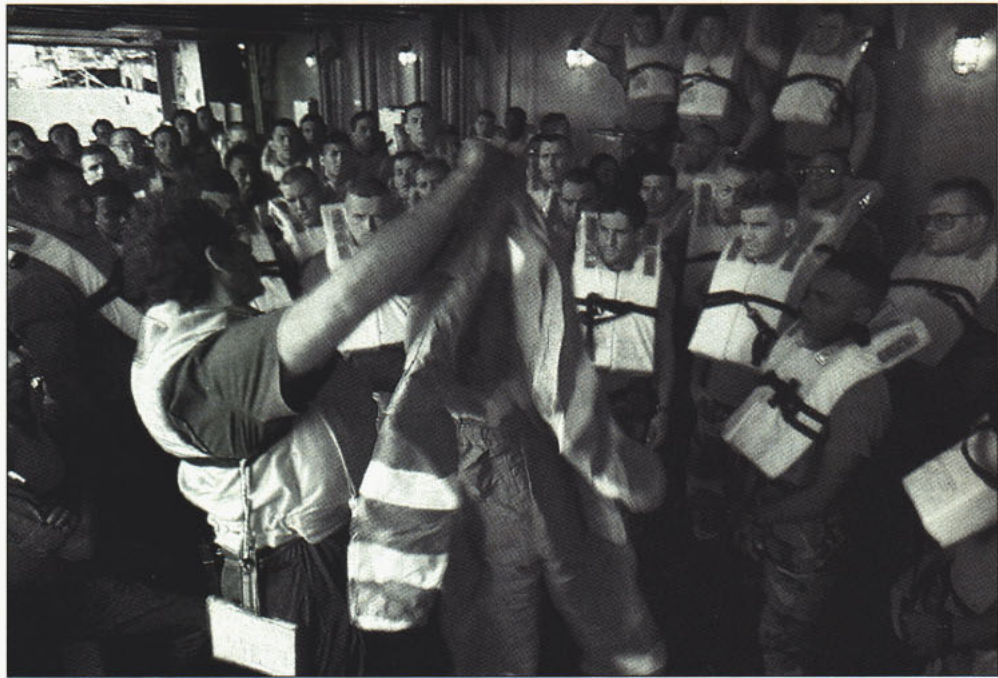


sure the soldiers would be prepared for any situation.

On top of all the new things to learn, there were the usual tanks, trucks and weapons to maintain. Every day the soldiers ensured all vehicles were properly secured to prevent them from moving during high seas.

The soldiers were also responsible for defense of the ship while entering the Persian Gulf. They manned the *Vulcan* weapons system, used for direct-fire, surface-to-surface or surface-to-air defense. Other weapons available for the defense of the ship were self-contained *Stinger* missiles, 50- and 60-caliber guns. "There are more than enough soldiers on board for the guard service and to act as lookouts needed to go through the Suez Canal in this situation," explained Sliwoski.

While some soldiers stood guard, others volunteered to help the ship's crew in the engine room. "It's really hot down there," said one of the volunteers. "I should have no problem get-



Far left: Soldiers ready their equipment. Above: Shipboard firefighting may have been a new, but vital, experience for the troops. Left: A ship laden with tanks and soldiers transits the Suez canal.

ting used to the desert heat after working down there," he said.

Getting used to the weather was one of Army Major Kent Cuthbertson's biggest concerns. The closer the ship got to Saudi Arabia, the more time Cuthbertson, officer-in-charge of the soldiers, had the troops spend on deck in the heat. With canteens full of water and sun screen protecting their bare skin, the soldiers received extensive training in nuclear, biological and chemical warfare and first-aid. "I've been questioning most of them and I

haven't run into a soldier who is not efficient in NBC defense. I think they're ready to go," said Cuthbertson.

Finally, after what seemed a lifetime to some, *Regulus* pulled into port. The vast Saudi desert dwarfed the flagship of the fast sealift fleet. Soldiers once again crossed the afterbrow with their M-16 rifles and fully-loaded back-packs—but now they were silent, aching and anxious to place their feet on solid ground.

The soldiers who hitched a ride with MSC were just a fraction of the personnel that have arrived to take up a defensive position in Saudi Arabia. But the equipment they will rely on in the event of hostilities is continually being delivered by MSC ships. During this unprecedented quick-time buildup it took a unique organization to tackle a never-before-tried task, the ships of Military Sealift Command delivered the goods. □

Allen is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands



Taking a break

Desert Shield warriors work out while waiting for the call.

Story by JO2(SW) Joe Bartlett, photos by PH1(AC) Scott M. Allen

Sailors and Marines in the Middle East fill their days drilling, digging, getting dusty and drinking gallons of water during the high-tempo operations and readiness training of *Desert Shield*. Like sailors and Marines everywhere, the American service men and women, both in the desert and sailing in Middle Eastern waters, take full advantage of the little time off they are granted by keeping fit and keeping in touch.

Packed beside machines of war, exercise equipment of all types was crammed into aircraft and ships bound for Saudi Arabia in the largest deployment of American military might since Vietnam. Nautilus machines, free weights, bench presses and other weight-training gear appeared in the sands to tighten the muscles of desert dwellers and shipboard strongmen.

Physical training is a big part of the daily routine, a break from the sometimes monotonous chore of preparing for combat and patrolling shipping lanes.

"Just working up a good sweat helps clear out your head," said one sailor aboard USS *Brewton* (FF 1086) as he bench-pressed several hundred pounds on the ship's outdoor weight machine. "It's easy to get out of shape aboard ship, so the weights really help."

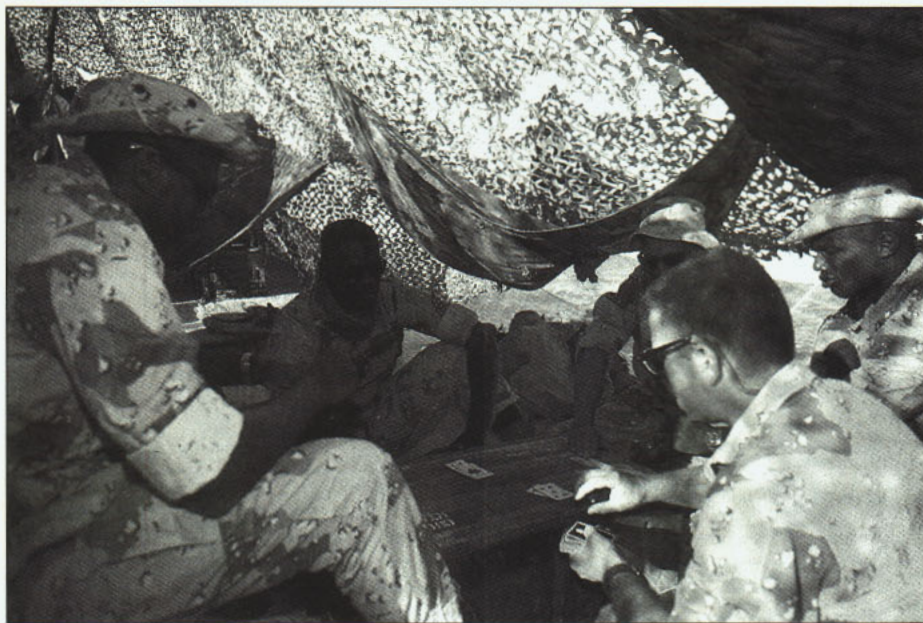
Those not out to break Arnold Schwarzeneger's records take advantage of other types of fitness equipment. With President Bush's order for *Desert Shield* commitment, thousands of baseballs, footballs, basketballs, volleyballs and frisbees, traveled 9,000 miles to the Saudi desert — a perfect environment for soft landings

during aggressive flag football, sand-dune volleyball games or frisbee tosses. When sand warriors got a much-deserved afternoon for recreation after four straight weeks of work, the skies were filled with leather-skinned guided missiles donated by family, friends and franchises around the U.S.

Alongside the dusty exercise setups in the desert hang seabags filled with Saudi Arabia's greatest natural resource — sand. The duffels make the perfect heavy bags, where aspiring prize-fighters, kick-boxers or martial arts masters spar against their immobile opponent.

The chance to play as hard as they work reduces stress for those in the

Above: Sailors and Marines keep inter-service rivalry alive during a football game in Saudi Arabia.



desert and on ships in the *Desert Shield* environment — one filled with tense moments during interception operations and intensive desert training.

"A conscious effort must be made to ensure that some fun is had," said CDR George L. Skirm III, commanding officer of USS *Flint* (AE 32), whose crew has been continuously at sea since June 20. "Relaxation must be designed into the program, mail must continue to flow back and forth, two-way support must be maintained with and from the spousal support groups back home. If that's done, there's no morale problem."

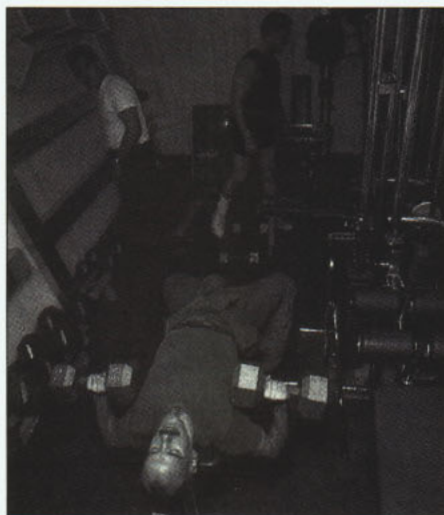
Throughout the Middle East, sailors and Marines perk their ears for two important words that aren't heard often enough: "mail call."

The rush of military forces moved much faster than the mail, and left the U.S. Postal Service unprepared for the deluge of cards, letters and care packages for *Desert Shielders*. The volume of mail to the Middle East multiplied more than 500 times as sailors, soldiers, airmen and Marines arrived in Middle East waters and the sands of the Saudi desert.

Aboard USS *Independence* (CV 62), Navy postal clerks sort through more than 25,000 pounds of mail for their battle group every few days.

"Everyone on board knows us," said Postal Clerk 1st Class Godofredo Frenilla from behind a mountain of mail that just arrived by C-2 from

Above: A friendly game of cards helps Camp Pendleton corpsmen relax while off duty. Right: Men and machines must maintain a high state of readiness if USS *Independence* is called upon to perform in an armed conflict. Below: Pumping iron while at sea not only keeps the crew in good shape, it's also a great way to relieve stress.



Bahrain. "We have a lot of friends when they sound mail call."

Frenilla said that when mail arrives, there's no problem finding volunteers to help carry the load. Once aboard the carrier, mail is transferred by helicopter to waiting sailors and Marines on smaller ships.

"Mail is the biggest factor for morale right now," said PCC Victor Forker aboard USS *Nassau* (LHA 4) in the Gulf of Oman. "The guys are anxious to know a lot more about what's



going on back home and if their family's behind them."

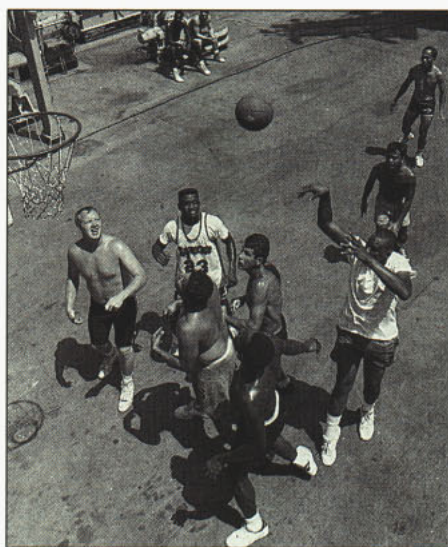
Support from the people of the United States is evidenced by tons of mail from around the country addressed to "any sailor or Marine" that reaches ships and desert outposts.

"They line up for hours, each trying to get a piece of that mail," Forker said. "They're glad that people know they're out here and care about them."

Forker said the message that America supports them has been a shot in the arm for men and women on station. Children, teachers, church groups and individuals from across America send greetings and trinkets to the forces like rock star fans.

One young girl from Miss Clepper's

ALL HANDS



The deck of USS *Flint* is turned into a basketball court during lunch and after work. Sailors at sea find little time for recreation so they make the most of each opportunity for healthy competition.

leaves those without mail feeling isolated. But some of these men and women are getting a chance to make a call to family and loved ones in the states while they steam aboard ships in the region.

Aboard most ships in the Middle East, volunteer sailors operate Military Affiliate Radio System stations when atmospheric conditions allow the low-powered radio waves to reach U.S. coasts. When news of the Kuwait invasion hit the home front, 92 MARS stations ashore in the U.S. began the endless task of helping sailors at sea inform their families that all was well.

Scores of crew members fill out request forms and wait patiently while MARS operators tune their transmitters to span the planet and reach the U.S. homefront. Aboard *Flint*, Electronics Technician 2nd Class Bernie Walls works through the night — the only time propagation allows his transmitter's signal to make the stretch while in the Gulf of Oman. Walls checks into a "net" of eight other ships using one shore-based MARS operator in Rhode Island to patch collect calls through to families and loved ones back home.

"They get all excited, the tone of

their voice changes and their face just lights up when they hear the voice over the speaker," Walls said. "It gets a little tiring after a long night on the air, but I feel good because I see a lot of happy people aboard."

MARS played a big role in the beginning of *Desert Shield*, and still does, convincing family members and loved ones that their sailor or Marine was not threatened by the invasion. It also plays a big role in delivering American Red Cross messages to sailors informing them of family emergencies and birth announcements.

Fellow *Flint* MARS volunteer, Electronics Warfare Technician 2nd Class John Drew, said that along with using the station to receive BBC and Voice of America newscasts, MARS brings positive words of support from families back home.

"It's kind of like mail call," he said. "We share the positive things with each other and good news travels throughout the ship."

That good news is spread back home through phone networks set up with ships' ombudsmen, who contact family members who were unavailable when the MARS call was placed or pass on general information.

"Since we're all the way out here, talking to my family makes me feel more comfortable," said Radioman 3rd Class Anthony Dent following a four-minute call to his mother. "It gives me a whole bunch of strength to keep on going."

With the strength from keeping fit and keeping in touch, the nearly 60,000 sailors and Marines of *Operation Desert Shield* are maintaining the strength necessary to drill, dig, get dusty and stay determined to carry out their mission of answering their country's call. □

fourth-grade class of Rockwall, Texas, sent a package of Kool-Aid to a Marine aboard *Nassau* "because I know you're tired of drinking yucky water."

"I watch the Marines open these letters from the kids and their faces light right up," said Religious Program Specialist 1st Class James Huff, chaplain's assistant for the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade aboard *Nassau*. "It shows a lot of support for the Marines and sailors here."

"This mass of mail has an incredibly positive impact on the people," said CDR Glen McCranie, 4th MEB's force chaplain. "These letters help fill that void for the guys here until mail from their family finally arrives."

Still, that void can become vast and

Bartlett is assigned to Navy Internal Relations Activity, Washington, D.C.

Combining the forces

Multiservice personnel pull resources together in times of crisis

Story by JO1 Denny Bannister

Some sailors imagine duty in a joint service command to be chaotic. The meshing of uniforms, programs, policies and codes into one workable system, seems unworkable. Learning rank insignia in an attempt to distinguish a private first class from a petty officer first class is one difficulty. Translating each service's slang (the head is a latrine in army lingo), is another.

Since most sailors have no experience living and working outside a traditional Navy environment, many are concerned about adapting to life at another service's base, fort or station. But joint duty continues to be a unique challenge. For service members at U.S. Transportation Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill., their "jointness" gives them an opportunity to work together during a crisis, in addition to providing cross-training among the branches.

Although each service has its own transportation specialties, the responsibilities of the multiservice personnel at USTransCom are merged to accomplish a global function. Instead of each service branch attempting to arrange its own transportation during a wartime crisis (transporting personnel, food and supplies), one unified command has been created for this mission.

Staffed by components from the Navy, Army, Air Force and Marine Corps, USTransCom uses transportation resources already in place and currently used by each branch. To fulfill its wartime needs, USTransCom uses the Navy's Military Sealift Command, the Air Force's Military Airlift Command and the Army's Military Traffic Management Command. Having personnel from each service helps solve any transportation problem encountered.

"This is prime duty for any sailor," said Yeoman 1st Class (SW) Thomas Boer, attached to USTransCom's Director of Administration. "I'm getting some tremendous joint-service experience with mid-level and senior enlisted personnel from other services — all working toward unifying a global transportation network. This exposure to the way things operate on a large scale can make a difference to a selection board when promotion time comes," Boer added.

"Anyone who wants to be a leader and get ahead in the Navy of the 1990s, needs to pursue joint-service assignments," said VADM Paul D. Butcher, deputy commander in chief, USTransCom. "If a petty officer first class comes out of here after a good tour of sea duty, it would appear to me that

combination would be very beneficial for advancement to chief."

Of the 400 personnel assigned to USTransCom, the Navy provides ap-



proximately 75 personnel, ranking from seaman to vice admiral. The command works hard to maintain equal joint-service representation.

"It is vitally important that we get the right quantity and quality of Navy personnel assigned, since 95 percent of equipment, material and troops used in a wartime situation are transported by sealift," Butcher said. "We encourage qualified and innovative people to request duty here and be challenged on an everyday basis."

CAPT John Kennedy Jr., who

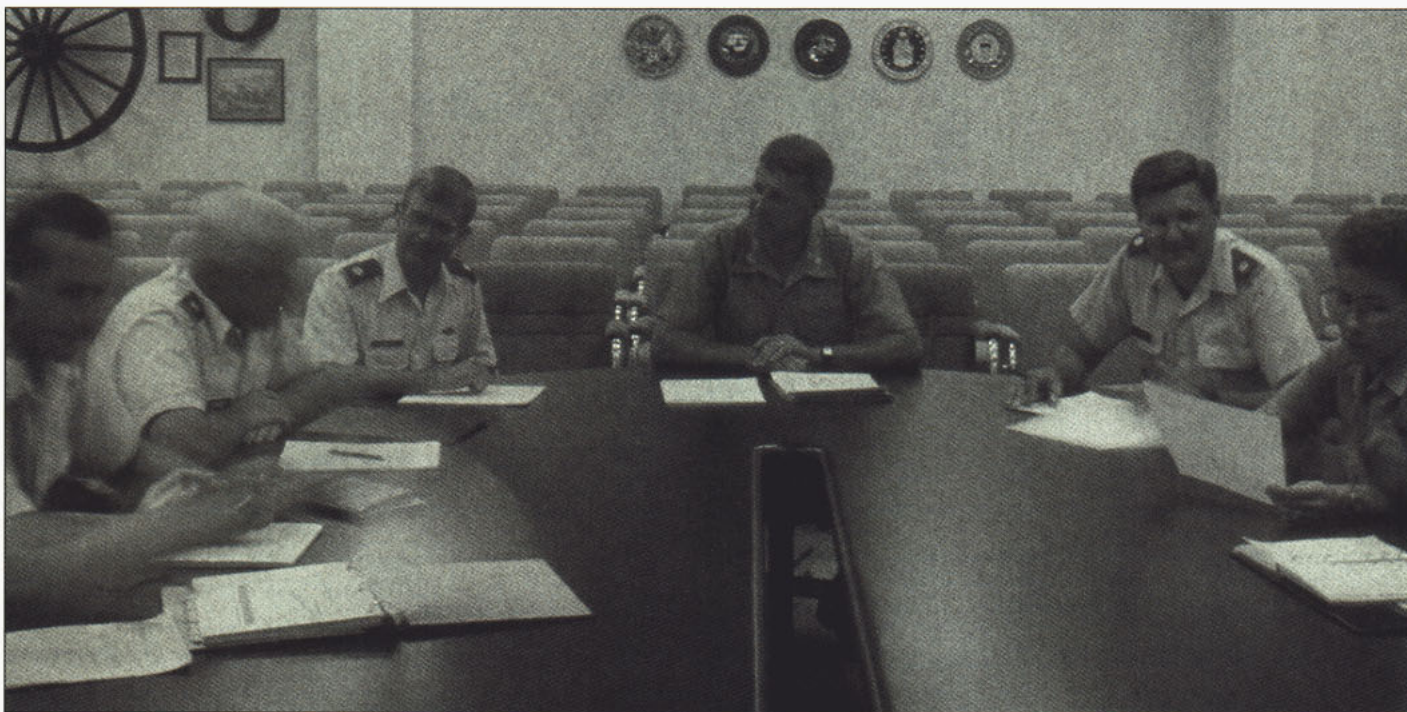


Photo courtesy of USTransCom

Above: Joint-service military transportation command representatives discuss planning measures. Below: Equipment and personnel join forces in a group effort to mobilize.

serves as the director, Manpower and Personnel, said he's looking for interested volunteers. The command needs a good mix of officers and enlisted, senior and mid-grade sailors, soldiers, airmen and Marines.

Since its formation in 1987, US-TransCom has moved tens of thousands of U.S. forces and hauled tons of equipment — many movements accomplished in just days. Involved in this mammoth task is an enormous amount of details, arrival times and weights — all of which are coordinated by a group of military personnel, wearing uniforms as diverse as their vocabulary — USTransCom. □



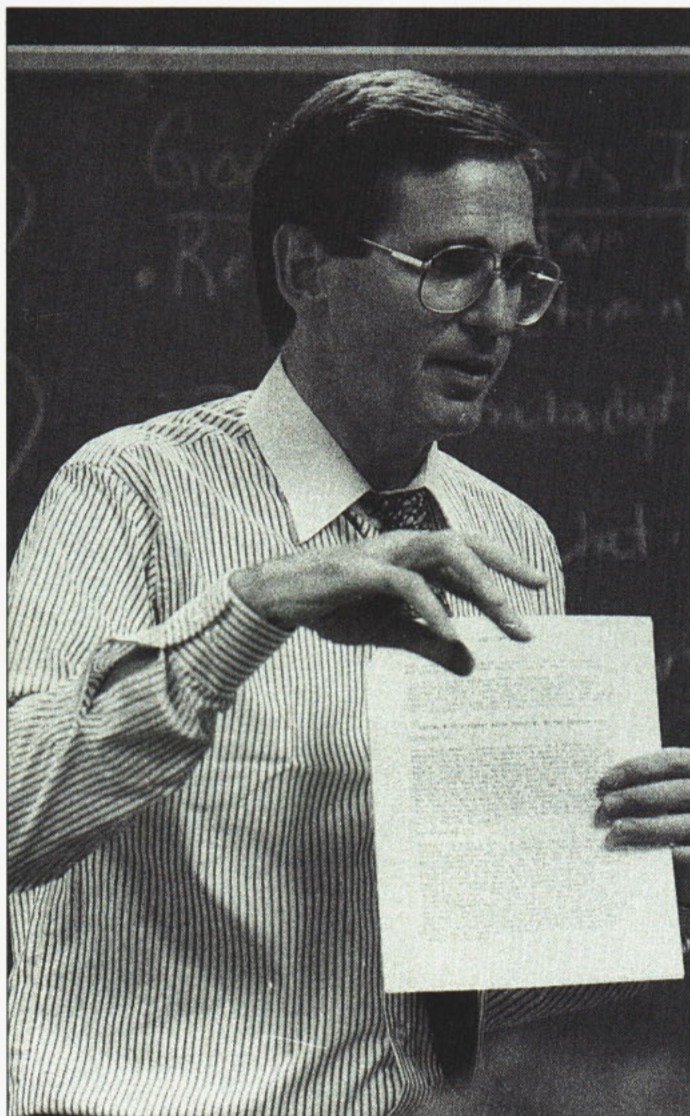
Photo by J.A. Hedrick

Bannister is assigned to PAO USTransCom, St. Louis. JO1 Chris Price of All Hands contributed to this story.

Helping families cope

In the face of the Mideast buildup, Family Service Centers' role is substantial.

Story by JOSN Cinnamon Brinkman, photos by PH2 Michael Poche



Operation Desert Shield has presented different challenges for the families of those deployed than those faced during a regular deployment. Naval Station San Diego's Family Service Center has answered their call for help.

New programs were developed specifically to help families of sailors and Marines deployed to the Middle East. In addition, according to CDR Allison Hayes, director of San Diego's center, regular programs were modified to focus on the problems families might face during *Desert Shield*.

"This comes down to life and death issues at this point ... and there's no sense dancing around that," said Nancy Tarbell, deputy director of the center. "What the families are really worried about is that their service member won't come back. We still have our basic services, but we have shifted our services to accommodate any reasonable request for assistance during the Middle East crisis."

Specifically, the center designed programs addressing concerns families are having during *Desert Shield*. Several support groups have been established including one for ombudsmen.

"The ombudsmen are under a tremendous amount of pressure right now," said Tarbell. "They are having to assist families who perceive this crisis as a real threat to their family's safety, so they need additional support."

Another special program the center developed together with San Diego-area schools provides information to teachers and administrators about what military families experience during normal deployments and especially during *Desert Shield*.

"It was a mutual idea," said Tarbell. "We had established relationships with schools in San Diego County through our parenting classes, so we know where the con-

Vice principal David Warren discusses the deployment of student's parents with school staff.



Dr. Sarah E. Lynch, school psychologist for the Sweetwater Union High School District in San Diego, talks to teachers about the stress students are under when parents deploy.

centration of military families is.

"We were thinking the schools' staffs were going to be under a lot of pressure to provide some encouragement to help these children [of deployed parents]. At the same time, the schools started calling us. They were seeing children having more difficulty because their parent was deployed to the Middle East," said Tarbell.

The first training session was held Sept. 6 at the Joy Bright Hancock Elementary School, located in the Murphy Canyon military family housing area. About 80 percent of the children attending the eight schools serving the area are military children. Staff members from three elementary schools attended the session.

"School teachers have more contact with children than any other human being, other than the parent," said Tarbell. "Parents often get caught up in the dynamics and emotions of a situation, but teachers have some objectivity and some professional distance from the child so they can be very effective in steering and guiding the child into expressing concern about a parent being deployed.

"We give the teachers skills," said Tarbell, "teach them the emotional stages of deployment, tell them what to look for in children and offer some specific tools to help kids work through this period."

"We impart our expertise and knowledge to the teachers, who deal daily with the children and parents," said Hayes. "So that expertise, that skill level, is filtered through the community."

The keynote speaker at the first 90-minute training session was Dr. Sara E. Lynch, the school psychologist of the Sweetwater Union High School District and wife of the commanding officer of USS *Vincennes* (CG 49). Lynch addressed how children can cope with deployment. Other speakers included Julie Swan, public affairs officer for Naval Station San Diego, who gave school staff members ideas on how to deal with the media; Ann Shewbert, from the

Murphy Canyon Family Support Center, who spoke of the resources available to the teachers and administrators; and Gail Sims, the community and youth outreach coordinator for the San Diego Armed Services YMCA, who spoke of the programs YMCA offers children.

The Family Service Center has also become a channel of information for families who live out-of-state.

"We put family members who call in from out-of-state in touch with the ombudsman of the command their family member is attached to," said Hayes. "The ombudsman has the most up-to-date information about what's going on with that command, so the family may find out if their service member is safe and whether or not he or she is deployed. We also tie out-of-state families in with Family Service Centers or Army and Air Force Community Service Centers in their area so they may use the services they provide, such as support groups," said Hayes.

Although military families are having some problems during this time of crisis, they are coping with them well.

"We don't have a group of hysterical families," said Hayes. "In fact, what we are seeing is a great deal of stability in the community. We are also seeing a great deal of common sense and professionalism on the part of the military families. We see the professionalism of the spouse who is left behind to keep a stable home life and we see the professionalism of the children in their acceptance that this is mom or dad's job and they're proud of that," said Hayes.

"There's a tremendous amount of patriotism in this particular operation and it's wonderful to see," said Tarbell. "In fact, we've been kind of wistful and moved by the patriotism displayed during *Desert Shield* and the patriotism is not wavering. People are solidly behind this." □

Brinkman is assigned to the Naval Station San Diego Public Affairs Office.

Liberian rescue mission

*Navy assists in successful
evacuation from war-torn country.*

Story by JOSN Matthew Wilde, photos by JO1 Alan Uyenco

The sun had not crept up over the horizon on "Mamba Station," but the men of USS *Saipan* (LHA 2) were already hard at work. There was no urge to rest, because adrenalin had the crew

pumped up and ready for action.

Officers filed into *Saipan's* wardroom to finalize nearly two months of training and preparation. Briefings began and the alertness level rose as

every possible angle of the upcoming mission was discussed.

At 6 a.m., nearly one hour after that meeting, *Saipan* turned into the wind and helicopter rotor blades began to turn in support of *Operation Sharp Edge*. Armed helicopter gunships lifted into the air to escort troop-carrying helos. On deck, five AV-8B *Harriers*, loaded with bombs and rockets, were turning up their engines. With three different armed groups ashore, there was no guarantee U.S. forces would not have to fire in self-defense.

After nearly two months of standing by off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia, *Saipan* was ready to perform the long awaited non-combatant evacuation operation. The scenario was simple:



Marines work relentlessly to secure their positions with sandbags for the evacuation of non-combatants during *Operation Sharp Edge*.

Rescue mission

From left to right: Joanna, Luann and Andy Bartauh from Monrovia, Liberia, file out of a CH-46E *Sea Knight* helo onto *Saipan*'s flight deck.

remove American citizens from danger and secure the U.S. Embassy.

Since last December, civil war had raged on in the small West African nation. As fighting increased between rebel and government forces, the safety of American citizens could no longer be guaranteed.

On August 5, 1990, *Saipan* was ordered to perform the NEO and protect the U.S. Embassy. The Marines' intensity peaked as the moment for debarkation drew near. With final preparations complete, they made their way in full combat gear to the flight deck and filed into waiting CH-46E and CH-53D helicopters. For the Marines the waiting was over, it was now time to put their training to use.

The operation ran like clockwork with the airlifting of the Marines into Monrovia to pick up the evacuees. Approximately 237 Marines from Battal-

ion Landing Team's 2/4 Hotel Company arrived at the embassy to ensure its protection from rebel forces.

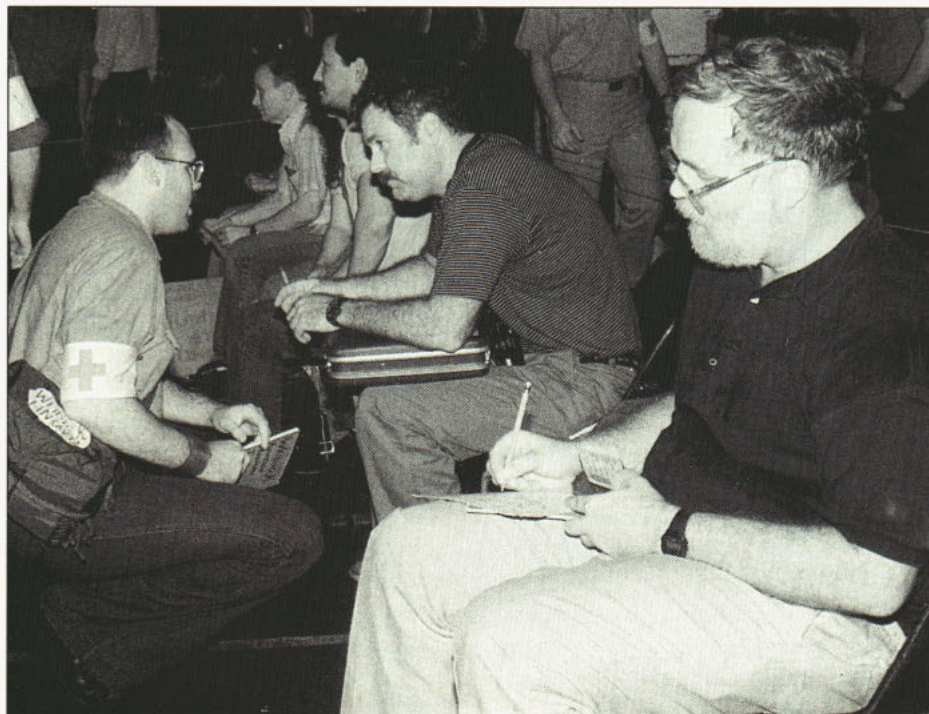
The embassy and two Voice of America transmitter and receiver sites were chosen for the NEO. These

points, located just outside Monrovia, were assembly areas for civilians to be evacuated. At each site, a platoon of 45 Marines from BLT 2/4's Echo Company was used to protect the people. Marines were on the ground for only a few minutes.

In the air, pilots punched through a layer of low-lying clouds. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 shuttled the civilians to *Saipan* and provided protection against possible enemy gunfire. Ground forces, provided by the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, were ready for any contingency.

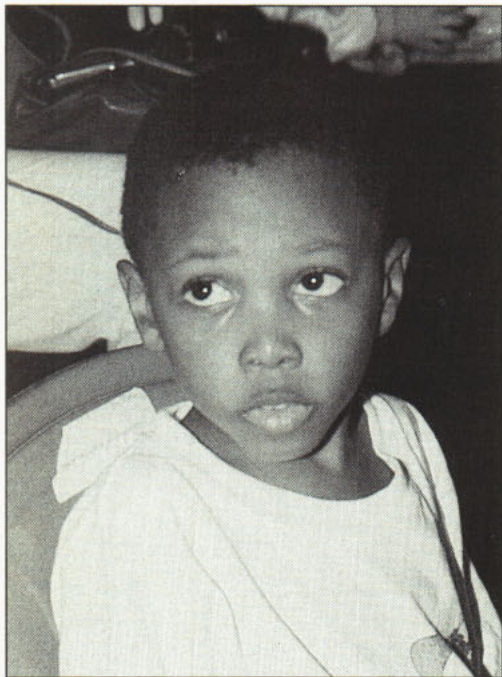
"The whole operation went smoothly and everyone who participated did an outstanding job. It was a perfect, textbook operation," said CAPT A. M. Petruska, *Saipan*'s XO.

Once the 95 American citizens and foreign nationals arrived aboard *Saipan*, three processing stations were



Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Kevin Weiding (with armband) looks after the medical needs of Liberian evacuees aboard *Saipan*.

Right: Marine First Lieutenant Anthony Stone (with binoculars) observes the situation in the U.S. Embassy compound. Below: Confusion is written on the face of this young Liberian national recently evacuated from his small war-torn nation. Bottom: Marines "move out" during the evacuation mission to a waiting CH-46E helicopter.



used to gather general information. Most of the evacuees were joyous, but some were in tears about leaving family members and friends behind.

One middle-aged man had tears of sadness running down his face. All he could say was, "It's all in the hands of God now." He had been separated from his wife and 4-month-old baby because of the war.

One mother clutched her daughter as she wept. Her husband and most of her personal belongings were still in the civil war-torn nation.

Meanwhile, medical personnel waited to render aid if needed. After initial processing was completed, the civilians were treated to a hot meal on Saipan's mess deck.

"It was always very comforting to know that there were U.S. naval ships



standing by off the coast to protect us. I'm very happy that I was evacuated and that everyone is safe," said Mike Ruhm, an embassy communication worker. "I was really impressed by how well-planned and organized this operation was," he added.

"I was in Liberia since September 1989, and I've seen the entire war. As it progressed, the war gradually hurt a lot of innocent people," said Dan

Flynn, a U.S. Embassy employee. "I'm just happy to be out and to be able to eat some delicious hot food again," he added with a smile.

A civil war spares no one; adults as well as children feel its effects. One young native Liberian and his family were able to escape the horror.

"I feel really bad about leaving my friends behind, but on the other hand, I'm happy my family was able to leave

Rescue mission

safely," said 16-year-old Liberian resident, Raymond Bartuah. His step-mother, an American citizen, worked as a secretary in the embassy for four years.

As the last aircraft landed for the evening, the initial operation was over,

but the entire mission was far from complete. As many as 237 troops remained at the embassy for additional support.

As one young girl walked out to a waiting helo to safety clutching a Cabbage Patch doll and her few posses-

sions, an older woman nearby paused and looked up: "God bless you all," she said. "Thank God for the U.S. Navy." □

Wilde is assigned to the Public Affairs Office aboard USS Saipan (LHA 2).

NEO

Helping people out of harm's way

Story by JO1 Lou Fink

"Non-combatant evacuation operations provide emergency transportation to get non-combatants out of harms way," said Army Major Robert Walters, plans officer for Amphibious Group 3, in San Diego, Calif.

"Initial NEO plans are already established at U.S. Embassies throughout the world with details of how they would notify U.S. citizens if an evacuation becomes necessary," said Walters. In addition to U.S. citizens, citizens of other countries may be included in the evacuation plans. NEO plans are prepared to varying levels of detail depending upon the country involved and include coordination requirements between the state and defense departments.

In some countries with large concentrations of U.S. citizens, including military family members, small portions of the NEO plan are executed periodically. For example, in West Germany, the U.S. Embassy in coordination with the DoD, implements part of their NEO plan by actually transporting civilians out of the country.

NEO plans identify the best way of

getting people out of a country and may include chartering commercial airlines, using military air transports, or using Navy sealift capabilities.

"For most countries in the world, NEO plans depend on the Navy's sea lift capability," said Walters. Naval Amphibious Ready Groups are responsible for responding to NEO re-



Chief Electronics Warfare Technician Lawrence Artzer explains the shipboard NEO process to civilians aboard Saipan.

quirements. An ARG consists of three or four amphibious ships with a Marine expeditionary unit (about 2000 Marines) embarked.

Two ARGs are always deployed and

ready to respond to NEO commitments. One ARG is normally deployed in the Mediterranean and one in the Western Pacific, but ARG deployments are often shifted to global hot spots to enable them to respond rapidly where needed.

When a country becomes unstable, the U.S. Embassy in that country begins contacting U.S. citizens and tells them when and where to meet should an evacuation become necessary. The embassy is also responsible for getting control of the people to be evacuated and working with the DoD to coordinate evacuation requirements.

According to Walters, the State Department makes it clear to the country in question that the evacuation is only intended to move non-combatants out of harm's way and is going to influence other events within the country. "We basically go in under a white flag to get our people out." □

Fink is a reservist assigned to Public Affairs Office, ComPhibGru 3, Reserve Detachment 219, San Diego, Calif.

“It’s a girl!”

Miracle of birth happens at sea.

Story and photo by JOSN Matthew Wilde

It was a race against time, knowing the birth could happen at any moment. As contractions came closer and closer together, the urgency of the situation heightened.

Instead of a streaking car or ambulance making its way to a hospital, a CH-46E *Sea Knight* helicopter was used to fly the expectant mother to the amphibious assault ship USS *Saipan* (LHA 2) for the delivery.

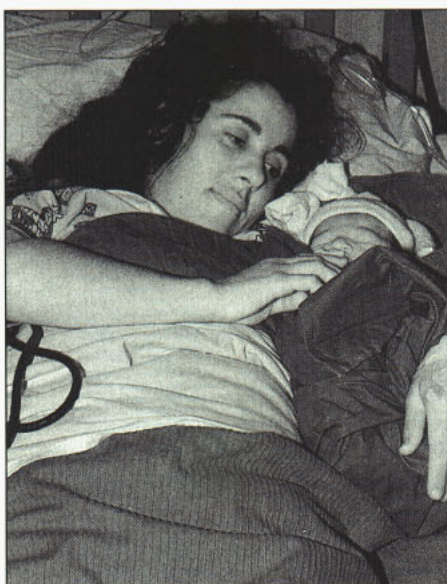
Within hours of arriving aboard *Saipan* Aug. 16, Afaf Blell, a Lebanese national, gave birth to a healthy 8-pound, 12-ounce baby girl, Nada.

Operating off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia, *Saipan* had been involved in a non-combatant evacuation operation of American citizens and foreign nationals since Aug. 5. Blell, an evacuee from the civil war-torn city of Monrovia, fled with her family to the U.S. Embassy compound only five hours before the birth.

The birth of a child is normally one of the most anxiously awaited times for a family. However, for the Blell's, the anxiety was amplified by their escape to a safe haven from the fighting within the small nation.

After arriving at the embassy, American personnel notified physicians aboard *Saipan* about Blell's situation and ordered her to be transported to the ship with minimal delay.

With an operating room used for the delivery, Blell gave birth to the only baby ever born aboard *Saipan*. LT (Dr.)



Afaf Blell, a Lebanese national evacuated from Liberia, holds her newborn daughter Nada, the first baby ever born aboard USS *Saipan*.

David Dye, family practitioner with Fleet Surgical Team 2, performed the delivery. Having performed more than 500 deliveries during his medical career, Dye had experience on his side.

"The delivery was my first aboard a naval vessel. It went very smoothly with no complications," Dye said. "It's a great experience to be able to bring a life into the world, especially when there is so much death and destruction close by on the shore."

Originally from Rahbe, Lebanon, the Blell family lived in Monrovia for

the past 13 years. "This is a great day for my family," said Mouin Blell, the proud father. "We're very happy to be out of Monrovia and happy that our baby is doing fine."

Saipan has one of the most extensive medical facilities afloat, although they were designed more for treatment of casualties than delivery of children.

With Nada's birth aboard a U.S. Navy warship, she now holds dual citizenship. When she reaches the age of 18, however, she will have to choose which to keep, American or Lebanese.

"The baby was born right on time. I'll never forget this day and the help of the U.S. Navy," Mouin Blell said. He continued, saying that once he settles his affairs in Monrovia, he would eventually like to take his wife and four daughters to the United States.

Saipan operated off the coast of Liberia from the beginning of June through August in support of *Operation Sharp Edge*. Since initial non-combatant evacuation started, *Saipan* helicopters airlifted more than 600 American and foreign nationals to safety aboard the ship. From *Saipan*, the civilians were flown to Freetown, Sierra Leone, where they boarded commercial jets to various destinations. □

Wilde is assigned to USS Saipan (LHA 2) Public Affairs Office.

News Bights

Operation Desert Shield special edition

Speaking from the White House on Sept. 21, President Bush said sanctions remain America's strategy to resolve the Middle East crisis but voiced concern over Iraqi action in occupied Kuwait. The President said any Iraqi support of terrorism would have serious consequences but he said he's not trying to send a signal indicating a military solution. Bush wants to see a peaceful solution. He could not predict how long it would take for the sanctions to work, reemphasizing that moral principles were involved in U.S. actions.

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Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III recently said that, "At stake in the Persian Gulf is nothing less than the principle that one people should be able to conduct its affairs free from the threat of armed subjugation by another. To deny Saddam the fruits of aggression is to keep alive the hope that someday all the nations of the world will live in freedom and peace."

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Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney has approved special supplemental pay for U.S. troops in the Middle East taking part in *Operation Desert Shield*.

The Sept. 19 approval, which means an extra \$110 a month for qualified officers and enlisted personnel, applies to military personnel participating in *Operation Desert Shield* in and around the Arabian Peninsula.

The pay applies to service members in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Northern Arabian Sea and the Arabian Peninsula.

The special pay was approved in recognition of the sacrifices military men and women are making.

"This is an appropriate step given the risks they face and the harsh conditions in which they serve," Cheney said.

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Sailors and Marines aboard U.S. Marine Corps helicopters carried more than a ton of emergency medical supplies from the U.S. Embassy in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia Sept. 26 to help reopen a field hospital in the city.

At last report on Sept. 27, the cease fire among the four armies in Monrovia had held for a fifth day, although news media reports from the city said sporadic gunfire could be heard. In a Pentagon news brief Sept. 27, DoD spokesman Pete Williams said U.S. Marines continue to

provide security to the embassy in Monrovia while the amphibious ships USS *Whidbey Island* (LSD 41) and USS *Barnstable County* (LST 1197) maintain their watch off the Liberian coast. Sailors and Marines aboard those ships have logged more than a month on station off the Liberian coast as *Operation Sharp Edge* continues. Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group 3-90 has accounted for the evacuation of 442 people from Liberia's capital of Monrovia since relieving MARG 2-90 Aug. 21.

The evacuees were airlifted by helicopter to *Whidbey Island* and later transferred to Freetown.

Since President Bush ordered a Navy-Marine Corps amphibious task force off the Liberian coast in early June, more than 2,100 people, including 171 U.S. citizens, have been evacuated by the two MARGs.

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Testifying before a House subcommittee on U.S. sealift requirements for *Operation Desert Shield* Sept. 26, the commander of the Military Sealift Command, VADM Francis R. Donovan, said the Navy's multibillion dollar investment in strategic sealift has proven invaluable.

During the \$7 billion sealift buildup launched in the early 1980s, the Navy acquired a vast array of sealift ships which provided the United States with a formidable strategic sealift capability. The buy included 13 Maritime Prepositioning Ships to support three Marine Corps brigades, 12 afloat prepositioning ships, eight fast sealift ships and two hospital ships.

According to Donovan, strategic sealift is a vital component of our nation's defense strategy, as 95 percent of all equipment and sustainment supplies must be moved by sea. There is simply no other practical way to transport the huge quantities needed. If we cannot get supplies and equipment to the right place at the right time, we lose.

* * *

Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney recently said, "The ability of the United States to do what we've done now over the last two months in the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia and in Southwest Asia, rests first and foremost upon the willingness of young Americans to put on the uniform of the United States military and go in harm's way, if need be, to defend our freedom and defend our interest. And that is perhaps our most significant national security asset." □

Mail Buoy

Thanks!

Returning from a quick trip to San Diego for a Change of Command of my former XO, Harvey Gannon, I found that the local amphibious community was really buzzing about the August issue of *All Hands*. This was due to the fine treatment given to the Seabees in that issue, as well as, for the article which you did regarding my amphibious career. The morale boost to ready forces is a side benefit you may hear about, but not often see. I've seen it, it works — keep up the good work.

Thanks to *All Hands* and JO1 Everette for his fine piece of writing giving me an *All Hands* send-off as I slipped my lines for one last time and sailed off into the civilian world.

— CAPT Robert J. Ianucci, Ret.
Virginia Beach, Va.

Bravo to the little guys

In regard to your article, "Going in harm's way," in the April 1990 issue of *All Hands*, there is a gross error on the October 1987 line.

I quote: "October 1987 — USS *Ranger* (CV 61) carrier battle group aircraft and ships destroy three Iranian gunboats and an Iranian oil drilling platform."

The real truth of the matter is, or should read:

October 1987 — "Four ships from the USS *Ranger* BG and two ships from CJTFME along with a Navy UDT Det. and Army Det. destroyed three Iranian gunboats and an Iranian oil drilling platform."

Give credit to whom it is due. I was there controlling the Army aircraft when they took fire from the IR gunboats. As far as the IR oil platform, it was four DD's from the battle group that shelled the platforms and the USS *William H. Standley* (CG 32) covering the AAW picture for us and the USS *Thach* (FFG 43) embarked with UDT Seals that launched their craft, and they in turn set charges to the oil platforms to finish the job off properly.

I hate it when the carrier battle groups get all the glory when it's the little guys that do the job. The carrier BG never even came close to any of the action or even entered the gulf with exception of the four ships above in 1987.

Thank you for letting me type my opinion. Overall, you have a great magazine. Just research a little more. Bravo Zulu.

— OS1(SW) W.A. Bruns
USS *Thach* (FFG 43)

In the April 1990 edition of *All Hands*, there is an error in the article titled "Going in harms way."

I was present during the March 1986 incident off the coast of Libya as a crew member of USS *Saratoga* (CV 60). The aircraft from USS *Saratoga* sank at least one of the Libyan gunboats.

I've enjoyed your magazine for the 19 years I've been in the Navy and this is the first mistake I've ever found. Keep up the good work.

— EMC(SW) Gregory J. Sinclair
USS *Saratoga* (CV 60)

• *Thank you for taking the time to point out who gets the credit here. Sometimes, though not intentionally, with the overflow of information, facts do slip through the cracks.* — ed.

Job well done!

My daughter, AD3 Scarlett Conner, NAS Alameda, recently sent me the July 1990 issue of *All Hands*. I wanted to take this opportunity to commend you on your article, "A sad farewell." It was well written and I am sure those who served on USS *Coral Sea* (CV 43) read it with both pride and sadness. I served in the Navy in the late 50s and 60s, and even though I was never on *Coral Sea*, I have had friends there over the years.

— Kenneth E. Conner, Th.D.
Covington Theological Seminary
Rossville, Ga.

Oops!

I have been apprised of an error in my letter to you concerning the use of wrong respirators aboard USS *Iowa* (BB 61). I made a statement that the safety officer should use chapter 15 of OpNavInst. 5100.23B as a reference source to implement a correct respirator safety program. Chapter B6 of OpNavInst. 5100.19B establishes proper respiratory protection programs for forces afloat and is appropriate in this case. It is respectfully requested that you print this correction notice to apprise all afloat commands of the proper reference.

Be advised, however, that *both* references specifically forbid the use of the disposable surgical masks outside of medical spaces. The incorrect reference does not alter the main point of my letter and the

apparent need for continued respirator training for this *Iowa* division and possibly others in the fleet.

— Kip Johnson, Safety Manager
Naval Medical R&D Command
Bethesda, Md.

Reunions

• **USS Lewis and Clark (SSBN 644)** — Reunion 25th Anniversary, Dec. 7, Charleston, SC. Contact Commanding Officer, USS *Lewis and Clark* (SSBN 644)(Gold), Building 646A, Naval Station, Charleston, SC 29408.

• **USS Navarro (APA 215)** — Reunion proposed. Contact Newton M. Marler by Jan. 1991, 3228 Plymouth Place, New Orleans, LA; telephone (504) 393-1663.

• **US Navy Armed Guard Veterans of World War II** — Reunion proposed for USS *Grand Canyon* (AD 28), USS *Stormes* (DD 780), USS *Warrington* (DD 843), USS *Vogelgesang* (DD 862) and USS *Charles R. Ware* (DD 865). Contact Raymond Didur Sr., P.O. Box 282, Cement City, MI 49233-0282; telephone (517) 592-6941.

• **7th Beach Battalion and USS Karnes (APA 175) 1943-46** — Reunion proposed. Contact Julius E. Shoulers, 1901 Paddock Rd., Norfolk, VA 23518.

• **NAVY-AROU 1 and 2 World War II** — Reunion proposed. Contact R. Shaw, 101 Grove Street Extension, Sewickley, PA 15143; telephone (412) 741-6228.

• **USS Fanshaw Bay (CVE 70), VC66, VC68, VOC 2 and any Taffy III group** — Reunion proposed. Contact Duane D. Iossi, 310 Edwards St., Ft. Collins, CO 80524; telephone (303) 482-6237.

• **USS Mount Baker (AE 4)** — Reunion proposed, Charleston, S.C. Contact Scott Nessler, USS *Mount Baker* (AE 34), FPO Miami, FL 34092-3010.

• **USS Rowe (DD 564)** — Reunion proposed. Contact Paul Siegle, 12218 Ridgecove Drive, Dallas, TX 75234.

• **USS Kansas City (AOR 3)** — Reunion proposed. Contact NCCM(SW) C.R. Johnson (Ret.), 1701 Dinuba Avenue, Space #158, Selma, CA 93662.

• **VF 33 and VT 33 World War II** — Reunion proposed. Contact Bill Byron, 2189 Argyle Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90068; telephone (213) 463-7869.



LT Robert Aitken bids his family goodbye as he and other staff members from National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md., depart for a mission in the Middle East aboard USNS *Comfort*. See story, Page 8. Photo by HM2 David Vangelder.



Standing
tall for
freedom

